# The Cathedral Homilies of St Severus of Antioch

**HOMILY 1** This is the first discourse given by Saint Severus, after he had been ordained Archbishop of the Church of the city of Antioch; and which he pronounced again, two days later, in the sanctuary of the holy martyr Romanos, at the request of a large number of people who could not hear him because of the tumult and the clamour of the large crowd which had met on the day it was ordained, on the 21st of the month of Koiahk, at the time of the 6th year of the cycle.

**HOMILY 2** By Saint Mar Severus, on the intelligence of the listeners and on the announcement of the Archangel Gabriel, which he made to the Mother of God and Ever Virgin Mary, and against those who divide Emmanuel into two natures after the union.

**HOMILY 3** On the trial of Jonah.

**HOMILY 4** On the fact that, before the feast of the Nativity, one reads, according to custom, the beginning of the Gospel of Luke; and, according to the verses of the Gospel, on the dogma of divine humanation and the “ethical” teaching, that is to say relating to the way of life, which teaches how we must prepare ourselves before the feast.

**HOMILY 5** Since in fact the side of the first man formed (of the earth), Adam, that is to say Eve, has become for us the origin of evil, for having welcomed the serpent’s fraud, hence it is that Emmanuel, the one who for us received the title of second Adam, after (his voluntary death) on the cross, has the side pierced by the soldier’s lance, restoring (thus) the woman who had been formed from there, making her to pass from softness to a virile courage and to the struggle for piety and to participate in her own firmness, and from it giving us the first fruits of immortality: indeed, after his last breath and his death according to the flesh, death by which he killed death, he accepted that his side was wounded and (from) this caused this extraordinary flow of blood and water to flow out which gives us incorruptibility, showing (thereby) that where death had taken its origin, there even flourished immortality.

**HOMILY 6** The beginning of this ascetic life is the meditation on death and the departure of the soul from the body.

**HOMILY 7** From the Patriarch Saint Severus, a homily on the Nativity, that is to say the Manifestation. It then speaks of the commemoration of Mar Stephen: this is why the end of the homily also deals with the martyr.

**HOMILY 8** Translation of the 8th of the Cathedral Homilies, on the children who were massacred by Herod in Bethlehem, of Saint Mar Severus, Patriarch.

**HOMILY 9** On Basil and Gregory, bishops. It was pronounced in the sanctuary of Saint Ignatius.

**HOMILY 10** On the Epiphany

**HOMILY 11** On the holy martyr Babylas.

**HOMILY 12** On Anthony

**HOMILY 13** On the munificence of the gift of the pious emperor (Anastasius), who had remitted some remaining contributions and taxes from the Public Treasury.

**HOMILY 14** Pronounced in memory of the Holy Mother of God and always Virgin Mary.

**HOMILY 15** On the Forty Day fast. It was pronounced the previous Friday in the church of Cassien.

**HOMILY 16** On the reason why we read the Book of Genesis during these forty days of fasting, that is to say of the creation of the world, on decency in our songs and on chaste and honest dress. It was pronounced in the great church.

**HOMILY 17** He who rejoices unceasingly because of Christ is not subject to this curse, and, what is the summit, the Word of God who for us was made flesh and became man unchanged, when he walked of his own accord towards the salutary cross, showed us the reason why he voluntarily endures the Passion in his flesh, accepting to be crowned with thorns, crying out, so to speak, by the facts themselves that it is with the will to erase the sentence (brought) against our race that it came, in order to blunt in some way the point of thorns, that is to say the sting of death, this why he wore them on his head.

**HOMILY 18** From the same Saint Severus: In what way was the ordinance established by the holy canons prescribing that at the holy fast of the Forty Days we must remember the holy martyrs; and about the forty holy martyrs. It was pronounced on the day of Saturday.

**HOMILY 19** On the drought that has taken place, that is, on the lack of rains, and how we have to be prepared in such circumstances.

**HOMILY 20** On the meeting with our Saviour, that is to say on the feast of the Hosannas and on the (words): He is blessed.

**HOMILY 21** Catechesis, which was pronounced, as usual, on the Wednesday of the great week of Easter, that is to say of the Passion, to those who were to be deemed worthy of holy baptism.

**HOMILY 22** On this (word): My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? and on what was said by Our Lord to the thief: In truth, I say it to you, today, you will be with me in paradise.

**HOMILY 23** Given in the Great Church. On this (word): The Word has “become” flesh and he has lived among us. And that we must be concerned about the poor, and during our life, and when we dictate our last wills.

**HOMILY 24** On the Ascension of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ and on the purple mantle which was given by our pious emperor Anastasius.

**HOMILY 25** On the Pentecost

**HOMILY 26** Warning on the horses shows, the first which took place after spring, so that we flee from harmful entertainment and the evils that flow from it, and on the holy martyr Theodore.

**HOMILY 27** On the holy martyr, Leontius.

**HOMILY 28** On the descent of Severus to Seleucia on the day of the commemoration of the Apostle Thomas.

**HOMILY 29** Which shows that the fact of anathematizing those who are guilty of having preached a gospel different from the one we have received, frees the city and the Church, that is to say the people, from the curse and the anathema.

**HOMILY 30** On Saint Simon the Stylite

**HOMILY 31** On the dedication of the Holy Cross and on the anniversary of the earthquake that took place.

**HOMILY 32** On John the Baptist

**HOMILY 33** About the man born blind, about whom the disciples asked Our Lord: Rabbi, who sinned, this one, or his parents, that he was born blind?

**HOMILY 34** After it was shown that Vitalian, that infamously named rebel, bowed ignominiously, when the meeting took place on this occasion.

**HOMILY 35** On the fact that, last year, on this very day when he was appointed to the city, he addressed the people; and on the holy martyr Romanos.

**HOMILY 36** On the Nativity according to the flesh of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**HOMILY 37** On Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian. It was pronounced in the sanctuary of the holy martyr Ignatius.

**HOMILY 38** On the Lights (The Epiphany). This is the second.

**HOMILY 39** On the Fast. This is the second.

**HOMILY 40** It was given inside the Holy Baptistery, on the evening of the beginning of the holy Fast of Forty Days, when we were going to deny ourselves entry to the baptistery which is done every Sunday evening, until the holy Feast of Easter and the Resurrection.

**HOMILY 41** Of the forty holy martyrs. This is the second. It was delivered when the homily, which had been delivered the past year, had been read again to the people, for they had requested it when it had been delivered.

**HOMILY 42** Second Catechetical Homily. It was pronounced on the Wednesday of the great week.

**HOMILY 43** On this verse from John: And of his fullness we have all received, and grace for grace; and on the newly baptized.

**HOMILY 44** On the commemoration of the righteous of old, which is celebrated with us after the week of the feast of the adorable Resurrection of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**HOMILY 45** On this verse written by the apostle to Timothy: Practice godliness; for bodily exercise is useful for little things, but piety is useful for everything, it which has the promise of life, of the life present, and of the life to come. And on what was said by our Saviour to Mary: Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. And on the victory of the pious emperor Anastasius, which has been announced to us.

**HOMILY 46** Why we are having a celebration on the day of mid-Pentecost and on the proper reading of the gospel of John, saying: Here then, when we were already

in the middle of the feast of Pentecost, Jesus went up to the temple and he taught, and the rest …

**HOMILY 47** On the Ascencion of the Great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is the second.

**HOMILY 48** On the Pentecost. But it was pronounced the following week on Friday, the fast being announced in advance as usual.

**HOMILY 49** On what the apostle said in the letter to the Romans: Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death, so death has passed to all men, because all have sinned; for until the law sin was in the world: but sin was not imputed when there was no law. However death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned, in the likeness of the transgression of the commandment of Adam, who is the figure of the one who is to (come). And on what is said in the Epistle to the Corinthians: And when everything has been subject to him, then the Son himself will be subject to him who submitted everything to him, that God may be all in all.

**HOMILY 50** On Saint Leontius, the Martyr.

**HOMILY 51** On the Martyr, Saint Domece.

**HOMILY 52** On the Maccabees.

**HOMILY 53** On the correction, that is to say calamity which, it is reported, was in sent by God on Alexandria.

**HOMILY 54** To those who, after prayer, go to the theatre. It is against the law to see these shows. we must prevent by works of repentance the necessity of the wrath which has been established and participate often in the holy and adored mysteries.

**HOMILY 55** Words of farewell, when he is preparing to leave to visit the holy churches of the countryside and towns and the holy monasteries.

**HOMILY 56** About what was remembered by the faithful of Qinnasrin for the commemoration of the Holy Martyr Sergius; and about this martyr and Bacchus who at the same time as Sergius triumphed in the fight.

**HOMILY 57** On his arrival in Qinnasrin and his reception by the faithful of the city. Only beginning of this Homily was preached, when it was interrupted because of a question of municipal affairs and a tumult, and it was suddenly resumed at the end.

**HOMILY 58** On his arrival in the city of Cyr and on the economy of the advent in the flesh of Christ our God.

**HOMILY 59** This Homily was also preached at Cyr, on the economy of the appearing in the flesh of Christ our God, against the blasphemy of Theodoret.

**HOMILY 60** This Homily was preached, when the Christians of Cyr made loud calls for him to stay with them, in order to hear further instruction.

**HOMILY 61** On his return, following the visit to the holy monasteries. This Homily was pronounced on the day of the commemoration of the Holy Forerunner, John the Baptist.

**HOMILY 62** On the crystals that were sent from Palestine, and on the coals which were vomited by the possessed, and which were shown to the holy Church of God of Antioch.

**HOMILY 63** On the Nativity, or the Epiphany.

**HOMILY 64** As the faithful have requested that the Homily given at Cyr against the blasphemies of Theodoret be repeated, this latest homily was added, after the beginning has been adapted to the commemoration celebrated of the children killed by Herod, and after some additions had been made. It was pronounced in the church, that is to say, “which is in the new City”, where these foxes of the Nestorian heresy slipped in.

**HOMILY 65** On Saint Basil and Saint Gregory. We record also, near the end of the Homily, some short words about Ignatius, clad with God.

**HOMILY 66** On the Epiphany.

**HOMILY 67** On Mary, Holy Mother of God and Ever Virgin.

**HOMILY 68** On the duty of young people. This Homily was given at the beginning of the Holy Fast of Lent.

**HOMILY 69** On preparation for entry into the Baptistery, which is usually after the holy Feast of the Resurrection. This Homily was given on the evening of the beginning of the Fast, when the holy place of the Baptistery was closed.

**HOMILY 70** This is the third Catechesis. This Homily was given, according to custom, on Wednesday of Holy Pascha or Passion Week.

**HOMILY 71** On the Ascension of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**HOMILY 72** On the deposition of the sacred bodies of the holy martyrs Procope and Phocas in the church called that of Michael.

**HOMILY 73** On the holy martyr Barlaha.

**HOMILY 74** This homily was given on the Friday of the week following Pentecost, where there was a fast according to custom, on the reading from Acts in which it is said: Peter and Joh went up to the Temple at the time of prayer of the ninth hour, and a man, lame from his mother's breast, was carried; and on the rest.

**HOMILY 75** On the holy martyr Julian.

**HOMILY 76** When we celebrated, according to custom, remembrance and supplication for all the poor and strangers who were buried in the places called

πανδέκτασ, that is to say, those who receive all, and are buried in it. As a very large number of the faithful were not present, the Homily was given later.

**HOMILY 77** A Homily of Severus, Archbishop of Antioch. That the Evangelists did not contradict each other in any way when they told the facts in different ways relating to the resurrection of Christ, our God and our Saviour, facts which we read on the night of every Sunday.

**HOMILY 78** On the holy martyrs Tarachos, Probos and Andronicos.

**HOMILY 79** On the word said by our Saviour in the Gospels to the Pharisees and the Scribes: but you say: the one who will tell his father or his mother: what you could benefit from me is corban, this does not honour his father or her mother, and how should we understand this word: it isn't what goes into the mouth that corrupts a man, but it is what comes out of the mouth? – against those on whom hanged the objects called amulets.

**HOMILY 80** On the day he was places at the head of the city and by a sign of God received the laying on of hands. This homily was given in the oratory of the holy martyr Romanos at the beginning of the fourth year. This is the first homily of this year.

**HOMILY 81** On what is written in the Gospel of Matthew: when the disciples arrived in Capharnaum, those levied the tax approach Peter and say to him: doesn't your master give it? and the rest.

**HOMILY 82** On the words of the Gospel following those that were first examined in the previous homily: on this day the disciples approach Jesus, saying: who therefore is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? and on the rest.

**HOMILY 83** On the Nativity or Epiphany. This is the fourth Homily. it was given within the oratory of the Virgin Mary, Holy and Mother of God, after it had been enlarged, during the restoration thanks to the munificence of the pious Emperor Anastasius.

**HOMILY 84** On Basil the Great and on Gregory the Theologian. This Homily was given according to the custom inside the oratory of the martyr Ignatius clothed with God (θεοφόρος).

**HOMILY 85** On the Epiphany.

**HOMILY 86** On Saint Anthony who was the first initiator of the solitary and hermit life in Egypt and became the leader.

**HOMILY 87** On Lent, which is the fourth on this subject.

**HOMILY 88** On the customary preparation for entering the baptistery.

**HOMILY 89** On the parable reported in the holy Gospel of Luke, the aim of which is: A man was coming down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers. And there is a reproach addressed to those who, as is the habit in the midst of the Fast, would not throw pieces of cloth to heal those who are tormented by ulcers from leprosy or from some other affliction.

**HOMILY 90** Catechesis which was pronounced according to the custom for those who were to be baptized on the very glorious day of Easter and of the Resurrection, when they were gathered in very large numbers. This is the fourth catechesis.

**HOMILY 91** On Athanasius the Great, confessor, Bishop of the great city of Alexandria, and against those who love the shows of the Olympic games.

**HOMILY 92** On the ninth hour of Friday after Pentecost.

**HOMILY 93** This homily was given when the synodic letters of the pious Dioscorus, Archbishop of the city of Alexandria were to be read.

**HOMILY 94** To those who had doubts, after reading the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, on genealogy and generation according to the flesh of Our Lord, our God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**HOMILY 95** On the division and the apparent disagreement between Matthew and Luke, about the genealogy according to the flesh of Our Lord, our God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. And, in the end, against those who had gone up to Daphne according to the pagan way.

**HOMILY 96** At the beginning of the homily, praise of the listeners, and then discussion, examination and solution on the last part of the doubts, which arose about the genealogy and about generation according to the flesh of Our Lord, our God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**HOMILY 97** On Thecla, the first of the martyrs.

**HOMILY 98** On the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah, which was brought by Matthew: Behold my servant, in whom my soul is delighted, and the other words which come after. And on what was said by our Saviour: All sin and all blasphemy shall be forgiven men; but the blasphemy that is against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks a word against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in the age to come.

**HOMILY 99** On the anniversary of the day in which, by the grace of God, he, Severus, received ordination and was promoted to the episcopate.

**HOMILY 100** On the martyrdom of Saint Drosis. At the end of the homily is a call according to which each one must offer what he can to complete the covering, the ciborium, of the holy altar.

**HOMILY 101** On the Nativity or the Epiphany, which is the fifth on this subject.

**HOMILY 102** On the great doctor of truth Basil, and Gregory the Theologian.

**HOMILY 103** On Epiphany, which is the fifth on this subject.

**HOMILY 104** On the verse, which is in the Gospel of Matthew, which says: Then, after having gone away, the Pharisees took counsel concerning him, how they would take him in the fault of his word. And they sent their disciples to him with the Herodians. And on the rest. And that, those who announced another Gospel than what we have received, they must be anathematized, according to the rule of the Apostle, even though they would be in great number.

**HOMILY 105** On the Holy Fast of Lent, which is the fifth on this subject. It was pronounced in the Great Church.

**HOMILY 106** On preparation for entry into the baptistery as usual.

**HOMILY 107** It was preached during the Fast, in response to some doubts relating to the Scriptures, which had been addressed and presented to Severus. The first is: “What then does mean that which is said by the prophet Isaiah? On that day there will be five cities in Egypt which will speak in the language of Canaan, and they will swear by the name of the Lord. Of these, one city will be called the city of Asedek. It is concerning this doubt that the whole homily was pronounced, and because of its length Severus could not touch the others.

**HOMILY 108** On the other questions that had been proposed, which the homily itself will make clear to future readers.

**HOMILY 109** Or fifth catechesis which was pronounced according to custom on the Wednesday of the week of the holy passion.

**HOMILY 110** On the holy martyr Thallelaios. It was improvised, without having been prepared in advance, in the city of Egee, in its oratory.

**HOMILY 111** This homily was also given in Egee. It concerns the subject on which it was also preached, when, in response to a question, it was improvised, without having been written in advance.

**HOMILY 112** On the dedication of the Great Church, when the synodic letters of Saint Timothy, Archbishop of the city of Alexandria were to be read.

**HOMILY 113** On the verse, which is in the Gospel of Luke, which says: Blessed are you who are poor, because the kingdom of God belongs to you. Happy are you who are crying now, because you will laugh. And: You, rich people, woe to you, because you have received your consolation; and again: You, woe to you who laugh now, because you will be in affliction and you will cry.

**HOMILY 114** On the Holy Martyr Drosis, and on those who suffered martyrdom with her; and an exhortation for a collection in view of what is lacking in the work which is above the holy altar.

**HOMILY 115** On the Nativity or the Epiphany, that is to say the appearance of God.

**HOMILY 116** On Saint Basil and Gregory the Theologian.

**HOMILY 117** On the Epiphany.

**HOMILY 118** On the woman of bad, that is to say sinful, life recorded in Luke.

**HOMILY 119** On the wedding feast recorded by the Evangelist John, which took place at Cana in Galilee, where Christ, after having also been invited, changed the water into wine. And that marriage is honourable. And to the address of a certain Romanos, who in a blasphemous and contradictory way changed by a different interpretation the word of the holy Gospels put before us.

**HOMILY 120** On the beginning of the Fast, and on the appropriate reading taken from the Holy Gospels, which the Homily itself indicates, going forward, when it makes a modest commentary on it.

**HOMILY 121** On preparation and readiness for entry into the baptistery, as usual.

**HOMILY 122** Exhortation on the usual donation of pieces of cloth for those who suffer from leprosy or are otherwise sick.

**HOMILY 123** Catechetical homily, which takes for its object and subject matter the confession of the Orthodox faith; but above all it touches on the abominable impiety of the Manicheans and in advance warns that no one falls into the nets of these, because some had even experienced such a pernicious error.

**Scholia** On the subject of the honourable and secret name, which, among the Hebrews, occurs in the Holy Books, which have been translated from Greek into Syriac – which is called among the Jews “separate name”.

**HOMILY 124** On the verse found in Matthew: Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am? and on the rest. And that the Orthodoxy of the faith must be characterized and tested, not by the places or by the authorities, but by a healthy and Apostolic confession.

**HOMILY 125** On the Doxology: “Holy, God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, you who were crucified for us, have mercy on us.”

**HOMILY 1 ON HIMSELF, AFTER HE WAS INITIALLY PROMOTED AND CAME TO THE PONTIFICATE AND APOSTOLIC SEAT OF THE CHURCH OF THE ANTIOCHIANS. AND THAT WE MUST CONFESS CHRIST AS ONE LORD, ONE SON OUT OF TWO NATURES, AND NOT TWO NATURES AFTER THE INEFFABLE UNION. AND AGAINST THE ATHIESTIC OPINION OF EUTYCHES. AND IT WAS DELIVERED IN THE MARTYRIUM OF THE HOLY MARTYR ROMANOS. THIS IS THE FIRST DISCOURSE THAT SAINT SEVERUS DELIVERED AFTER HE WAS ORDAINED ARCHBISHOP OF THE CHURCH OF THE CITY OF ANTIOCH; AND WHICH HE DELIVERED AGAIN TWO DAYS LATER IN THE SANCTUARY OF THE HOLY MARTYR ROMANOS, AT THE REQUEST OF MANY WHO HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO HEAR HIM DUE TO THE TUMULT AND CLAMOR OF THE LARGE CROWD GATHERED ON THE DAY OF HIS ORDINATION, THE 21ST OF THE MONTH OF KOIAHK, IN THE SIXTH YEAR OF THE CYCLE.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Long ago, the patriarch Jacob, remarkable for his virtue, having departed for Mesopotamia and having traveled part of the way, prepared to sleep—for it was evening, and especially the fatigue of the journey invited him to do so. In a vision, he clearly saw a great ladder reaching up to heaven: on one hand, it was fixed on the earth, and on the other, it reached up and extended above the heavens. And the Lord was leaning upon it, as the Scripture says. The blessed Jacob, having been deemed worthy of this vision and having benefited from this great grace, understood through this revelation the wondrous mystery that had been prefigured from the beginning. He took a stone, placed it as a stele for honor—for it was holy—and for the glory of God, who had explained the vision to him. He did not stop there alone but poured oil on the stone and then spoke thus: “This is the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” With such words, he almost cries out: “When the Sun of Righteousness shall shine upon the inhabitants of the earth”, the Word of God the Father, the chosen and precious cornerstone, according to Isaiah, who was anointed with the oil of gladness above his companions, and who humbled himself and was incarnate for us, then He will be for us a ladder. He will raise us to heaven, we who lie on the earth because of Adam’s transgression; He will reveal the glory of His Father and show Himself to us with the Holy Spirit,

teaching us one Lordship and one Divinity in the Holy Trinity, which leans upon the ladder, our Savior Jesus Christ, through whom those in heaven are united with those on earth. This is why our Lord Himself says in the Gospel to Nathanael: “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” And again elsewhere, He says: “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and he will go in and out and find pasture.” This "ceremony"—a miserable ceremony—after I was brought to this seat by I know not what words of wisdom surpassing all understanding, and when I see this church filled with men boiling with the Spirit and shining with the rays of orthodox light, I recall the words of the patriarch Jacob very opportunely and say: “This is the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” This is the spiritual flock that Peter, the greatest of the apostles, shepherded, nourishing it with the holy dogmas of religion. This is the rock upon which Christ, the God of the whole universe, established the foundation of the Church, which is in every place. This is the people upon whom the holy name of Christ has been written, and who before all others were called Christians—a new name that will be blessed on earth, and which Isaiah the prophet foretold. But this city, beloved of Christ, which bears all kinds of spiritual graces, has been troubled by the storm of impiety, first stirred up by Diodore and Theodore, the leaders of the unclean heresy produced by the spirits of perversity, and further agitated by their disciple of the same kind, Nestorius, when he was blinded like them by the brilliance of the devil’s folly. After him, the synod that gathered at Chalcedon stirred it up even higher, like the sea when it is agitated by a great storm, becoming wilder and raising its waves very high. This synod, if it remedied the evil heresy of Eutyches in a certain way, introduced into the Church the folly of Nestorius, which destroys souls; and by attempting to heal evil with evil, according to the saying of the proverb, it became the cause of a great sickness for the body of Christ, which is the Church, and not of salvation. For the only-begotten Son, the Word of God, who was incarnate and became man for us, without change or alteration, they divided into two natures after the ineffable and incomprehensible union, wrongly declaring as if it were a man who suffered death and the cross, and not the Lord of glory whom they crucified, having truly suffered for us in the flesh, though He is the incomprehensible and impassible God in His nature. For if the immortal Word of God the Father had not become one in hypostasis with the mortal—I mean the body of the same essence as ours, which has an intelligent soul—there would have

been no way for death to touch Him entirely. But having become flesh and man, and remaining equally God without change, He, the same Word of God, tasted death for us, after He became flesh for us; and He remained immortal, because He is immortal by nature. Therefore, he who first confesses with an upright heart, a firm mind, and an unshaken faith that the Word of God became flesh in flesh of the same essence as ours, as I have said above, will also confess that the same is truly God and man. He will attribute to the same individual the sufferings and wonders befitting divinity and humanity, the cross, the tomb, the resurrection, and immortality. And death will not at all change the conditions of immortality, since the immortal by nature made what was ordinarily mortal—that is, the flesh in which He suffered and died for us—become the same as Himself. Let us now flee, O people beloved of Christ, the folly of the new Jews, that is, those who gathered at the synod of Chalcedon, who divided the indivisible into two natures, seeking, according to the blasphemous tome of Leo, which nature was nailed to the wood of the cross, so that by attributing the possibility to the nature of humanity alone, they might not attribute it to the Lord of glory, our Savior, the Word of the Father, and thus divide henceforth the indivisible into two natures. For the word "two" dissolves the unity, and the whole theme of the Economy of our salvation, it destroys completely. Yes, such impious thoughts as these—let us flee far from them.

Let us confess one Lord of glory, that is, Emmanuel, one person, one hypostasis, one incarnate nature of God the Word, according to the formula transmitted to us by our inspired holy Fathers; and let us in no way endure praying with those who dare to separate the flesh of our Savior from the Divinity, with two natures after the ineffable and incomprehensible union, thinking thus to honor the Divinity. As the rebellious Eutyches and other heretics who raved with him in the same folly have said, by declaring that it is not fitting for us to lower the Divinity to a generation according to the flesh, they did not recognize, the senseless ones, that His birth, being from a Virgin, does not come from male seed but from the Holy Spirit. And finding a pretext in sins, insinuating that it would be shameful if God endured the impure generation of our poor nature, they said that He appeared in a phantasm. They did not know, these wretches, that where God is with impeccability, there is all purity and all holiness, for the stain of impurity is nothing other than the defilement that comes from sin. Moreover, straying into such vain thoughts, they

dared to say that God the Word did not truly become flesh, but that He took on the appearance of a man, that He left His dwelling to enter this world in a kind of vision seen in the imagination of sleep, so that in the end they made the Economy of our salvation a kind of baseless dream. This is truly a great and grave sin, and those who entertain such blasphemies differ in nothing from the Jews who crucified the Lord. For if it is as they say, then truly our preaching is vain, and so is our faith, and we are like those who are hungry and eat in a dream, and who, upon waking, see that their dream is vanity; or like one who is thirsty and drinks in a dream, and who rises still thirsty, while his soul hoped for vanity. The prophet Isaiah magnificently foretold the error of those who have thus gone astray with such words. For if the Word of the Father did not share with us the same essence, taking the seed of Abraham and becoming truly man, how shall we be called sons of God? For if Emmanuel had not taken our flesh, we would not have received the spirit of adoption; if He had not emptied Himself of His own will, becoming poor for us, though He was rich, we would not have been enriched by His poverty, according to the testimony of the Apostle. We would not have received from His fullness life and grace, as the holy Evangelist, John the Theologian, has said.

But avoiding ourselves such expressions full of atheism from both sides—I mean those Nestorians who are the Dyophysites, and the Eutychians—let us confess that Emmanuel is one, that He is God the Word of the Father, who became man out of love for mankind; that it is not at all possible to imagine two natures after the indissoluble union, but one unique nature of God the Word incarnate, that is, who became man while remaining God. Because, on the one hand, He took flesh from the Virgin Mary of the same essence as ours, we confess this without any hesitation. And, on the other hand, since the flesh He took became one with the Word of the Father, for this we say that He is one, the Son of God, and that there is one nature of God the Word incarnate. And this expression “He became flesh” manifestly shows that it is not simply by conjunction that the Divinity was united to the flesh, but that it is according to the hypostasis that it made one with it, so that those who dare to separate into two natures the Word of God from the flesh after the union no longer believe in a Trinity, but it is a Tetrad that they confess. But we, my brothers, let us remain standing, established upon the unshaken faith of the holy apostles, having secured ourselves by it on all sides; not being drawn away by the deceitful words of the heretics, but believing and knowing in truth that

Christ, the Son of the living God, suffered for us in the flesh; let us hold fast as an inheritance from our fathers the words of the great apostle Peter, for truly they close the way to all impiety. For one is God the Christ, born of the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary; He is the living Word and the wisdom of the Father, He is one and in no way divided into two natures. It is for this very reason that the blessed Peter judged it necessary to preach to all the orthodox dogma of religion, saying that “Christ suffered for us in the flesh”, thus designating one person and one hypostasis of God the Word incarnate. For if He is divided into two natures, then it is superfluous, nay, it is great folly to say: "He who could suffer suffered for us in the flesh"; but since He is God impassible by nature, having become man without change, able to suffer for us, for this reason (Peter) proclaimed to us: “Christ suffered for us in the flesh”. As if we had been worthy, then, of this great love for mankind from our Lord Jesus Christ our Savior, let us purify ourselves daily from the defilement of our sins and mortify the members that are on the earth—fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, which is idolatry—according to the teaching of the apostle. Thus indeed shall we prepare ourselves to speak the holy language of God. But let us not pour the choice perfume upon foul mud.

For what advantage is it to him who speaks with the sublime dogmas of religion and does not first purify his tongue from lying and slander, or from hypocrisy and deceit? As a wise man has said: “A blessing is not beautiful in the mouth of a sinner.” The blessed James also said: “Just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead itself.” A similar thing is expressed thus: "Just as a dead man, even if he still has his head on him, can perform no action, nor speak, nor walk, so, if a life of righteousness is not joined to faith, that faith is dead and without effect." For if the words of our Lord burn like fire, as God said through Jeremiah: “My words are like a burning fire”, then he who must speak with the dogmas and sentences of Scripture also needs a tongue burning like fire. It is for this very reason that the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in the form of tongues that scattered like fire. It is also with such a tongue that the holy martyr Romanos, in whose name we celebrate today, used in that famous defense he pronounced before the judge. The latter having said to him: "It is just to obey the Sovereign," the hero replied: "It is just to obey God, sovereign of the universe, rather than the Sovereign," and he continued to repeat such words until his head was cut off. After having kindled their fire with a great quantity of wood, the

executioners thought to burn the holy body, but the Lord of the universe glorified His martyr, for at once He caused a great rain to fall, extinguished the fire, and preserved the body of His servant unburned. And we too, my brothers, let us glorify Him who became flesh for us, by mortifying the thoughts of the flesh that are enemies of the spirit; let us glorify the Word of the Father by restraining the untamed impulse of senseless passions through continence. Let us glorify the Merciful by becoming ourselves merciful toward those who share our nature. Let us glorify the Lover of mankind by not being bound in our heart toward him who has become our enemy. Let us glorify Him who suffered for us by disposing ourselves also to suffer for His name. Let us glorify Him who dwells in the heavens and came down to earth for us, who ascended again to the heavens, who fills all places and governs them all—by forsaking earthly cares, occupying ourselves with heavenly things, seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. There is our true homeland, from which we fell, which has been restored to us by grace through the love for mankind of our Lord, who became man for us, even to restoring us to our original dignity. Indeed, all the works of this present life are no different from dreams or shadows, deceiving those who revel in pleasure as much as those who perform in the theater. Let us pass beyond all these things, then, and pursue the things of heaven with zeal, like runners in a stadium, before all these things pass away from us. For the form of this world is passing away, as Paul says. Let us not imagine that we have accomplished anything great if we disdain transitory things. Rather, let us hasten to enter the eternal kingdom of the heavens! May it be granted to us all to attain it! By the grace and love for mankind of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, together with His all-good Father and the life-giving and consubstantial Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 2 ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE HEARERS AND ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ARCHANGEL GABRIEL TO THE MOTHER OF GOD AND EVER VIRGIN MARY, AND AGAINST THOSE WHO DIVIDE EMMANUEL INTO TWO NATURES AFTER THE UNION.

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Perhaps you imagine that I rejoice and overflow with happiness because you delight in my poor words and hasten eagerly to hear me. In truth, I weep and lament, and your joy becomes the food of my sorrow. For I think that if you were not constrained by lack of nourishment and hunger, and if you were not fed by sound and orthodox teaching, you would not crave these vile and contemptible words like those who, lacking wheat, desire to share barley bread. Such was precisely the hunger foretold by the prophet Amos when he said: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will send a famine upon the land—not a famine of bread or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord” (Amos 8:11). Isaiah also threatened Jerusalem with this famine as a form of curse, saying: “From her shall be taken the prophet, the wise counselor, and the skilled architect” (Isa. 3:2-3). These names openly signify the teachers of divine words. Likewise, the Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said: “According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled architect, I laid a foundation” (1 Cor. 3:10). The prophet, adding to this curse, said: “The prudent listener shall also be taken from Jerusalem” (Isa. 3:3). But give thanks to God, who in His love tempers these grievous threats. The prophet spoke of “my Jerusalem,” but I say of this church: “He has not taken away the prudent listener.” For by the grace from on high, you listen intelligently to apostolic teachings. You recognize the voice of the true shepherd and resist a foreign voice (John 10:4-5), and you no longer allow yourselves to be led astray from the royal path. Therefore, I believe that a word has been given to me as well, which, before your intelligent hearing, is either worthless or of slight and modest value. Behold, some have now reached such impiety that, in the praise of the Trisagion—by which we glorify Christ the Savior, saying, “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal”—they do not add: “Who was crucified for us, have mercy on us.” They consider it shameful to proclaim as immortal the One who suffered in the flesh for us, and they have not learned to say with Saint Paul: “Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. 6:14). The cross, therefore, is true glory and an invincible armor when we

proclaim this of the incarnate God. Thus, with harmonious melodies in your souls, like a spiritual lyre, and moved by the Holy Spirit, you rightly raise this hymn daily to Christ, the living God. And until now, you have suffered bitterly in the face of those who divide Him—after the ineffable union—into the duality of natures. For if He who was incarnate and thus crucified for us is immortal, then He is one person, one hypostasis, and one incarnate nature of God the Word. But if, after the union, He is acknowledged in two natures—as proclaimed by the assembly of vanity, those gathered at Chalcedon—then, on the one hand, the union is destroyed, being divided into duality; and on the other, the mystery is divided: to the divine nature we attribute immortality, and to the human nature, only death. But you are not alone in your grief over this. The angelic powers also lamented and suffered with you when they saw that blasphemies had severed the bond between the earthly and the heavenly. They said among themselves: “When we exulted at the birth of Emmanuel, we formed legions, and marveling at the inexpressible love of God, we responded with praise. Seeing that the ceaseless battle was abolished, we resounded on earth the first hymn of reconciliation: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” (Luke 2:14).

Where, then, is this peace if we in heaven acknowledge one Son as the Word of God, even when incarnate, and make no addition to the hymn of the Trisagion? Thrice we proclaim Him holy when we glorify the one Lord of Hosts and confess one lordship of the Godhead in three hypostases. But men on earth, forgetting this gift and the splendor of the truth, divide the one Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—who is inseparable and indivisible—when they say that after the union, He is acknowledged in two natures. They introduce an additional number, even to the point of glorifying the self-subsisting man and thus completing the Trinity as a quaternity. They speak like the impious Nestorius: “Let us preserve the connection of the natures without confusion, let us acknowledge God who is in the man, and let us honor the man who, by divine connection, is adored together with the Almighty God.” But when He rose from the tomb—or rather, from the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9)—and ascended into heaven, we recognized Him as the Lord and King of Glory. Yet we were perplexed when we heard other powers say: “Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in!” (Ps. 24:7). And we asked: “Who is this King of Glory?” (Ps. 24:8). But when we learned that He is “the Lord, strong and mighty in battle” (Ps. 24:8),

who waged war against the Slanderer and, by the cross, conquered the adversary and enemy of all men—freeing from long captivity and tyranny those who were enslaved under his hand—then with joy we opened the eternal gates. We received Him not as a new or created God, but as the God before the ages, the Lord and King of the heavenly hosts. And through this abundance of love, goodness, and economy toward the Church, we recognized the manifold and multiform wisdom (Eph. 3:10) of the only wise and wonder-working God (Ps. 86:10). This is what those blessed and angelic powers thought and said, unable to endure the blasphemy of men. For if there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7), as the Lord's infallible word in the Gospel declares, how much more, do you think, do these intellectual and immaterial spirits grieve and feel compassionate mercy for the rational creature so closely akin to them—man—because of the utter ruin of souls, especially those who, in blasphemy, believe themselves to be pious! How much more must Michael, one of the chief princes (Dan. 10:13), who grieved so deeply over Israel's captivity in Babylon—as revealed to the divine and wondrous prophet Daniel—have been even more afflicted when he saw the holy people, the chosen race (1 Pet. 2:9), redeemed by the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19), the Son of God, and for this reason called Christians, now falling into anthropolatry and despising piety! Gabriel, his companion of the same rank and order, also shared in this grief, pity, and mercy for us—especially when he saw that the message he announced to the holy Mother of God and Virgin Mary was misunderstood. For he first said: "Rejoice, O full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28). By these words, he made known that God the Word, who is without beginning (1 John 1:1) and eternal, in an ineffable, unchanging, and unconfused manner, dwelt in the virginal womb and was incarnate there. For in that brief and indivisible moment of time, the archangel's word was spoken, and the Word of God was already in the womb. Thus, it was made clear that this greeting accomplished an extraordinary act and was not merely a salutation. But when the blessed Virgin was troubled and wondered what this greeting might mean (Luke 1:29), Gabriel—entrusted with this divine ministry, which neither compelled her nor left her in doubt or vain reasoning from allegory or deceit, like the inventions of poets—immediately explained, adding: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus" (Luke 1:30-31). "Do not be troubled," he said, "because I have announced the coming of God. Do not think that this birth will happen spontaneously or that He

will burst into your womb like lightning, as in fables or foolish imaginations. For the conception will occur according to the order of nature, but the gestation and birth will be without seed. The Word of God comes to restore human nature and its generation, initiating a new beginning for what is to come." Therefore, he said: "Behold, you will conceive in your womb" (Luke 1:31), so that the Lord took from the virginal womb and our substance flesh and human nature, blessing the first germination of our race. For if He had not come in all these ways—except sin (Heb. 4:15)—just as we do (though without human seed), if He had not taken flesh in the womb, if He had not been formed over nine months, and if He had not been born, He would not have abolished the condemnation against Eve: "In pain you shall bring forth children" (Gen. 3:16). Therefore, he said: "And you shall call His name Jesus" (Luke 1:31). For He who came for the salvation of our race is rightly called Jesus. The name "Jesus" means "salvation of God and healing" in Hebrew, where "Lahu" signifies the Almighty God. And lest Mary say, "But others before Him have been named Jesus," Gabriel added, elevating her mind: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:32)—as if to say: "You will not call Him Jesus as one among many men, but as He who is truly great. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised" (Ps. 48:1), as David sings of Him who is by nature the Son of the Most High Father. The words "He will be" and "He will be called" pertain to the economy of the flesh and the measure of poverty by which He willingly became poor for us, though He was rich, so that we might become rich through His poverty (2 Cor. 8:9). He who was by nature and eternally called great—yes, the Son of the Most High God. This One, though He became man for us without change, is also said "to be" and "to be called", so that in Him, as by a second beginning of our race, we too may be called gods and sons of the Most High. As the prophet David says: "I said, "You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High" (Ps. 82:6). And Gabriel added further: "And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32). He said this to remind the Virgin of the prophets and to teach her clearly that the One to be born of her was the Messiah foretold in prophecy: "He shall come from the seed of David" (Luke 1:33). Raising the holy Virgin's mind still higher and not letting her sink back into human and earthly thoughts—nor believe that His kingdom would be temporal like that of the sons of David who once ruled Israel—Gabriel added to what had already been said: "He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:33). No one can reign forever with an

endless kingdom except God alone, Creator and Master of all. Thus, even if, according to the economy, it is said in human terms that He will sit on David's throne, yet divinely He remains the same—King eternal, without end. Rightly, then, and in a manner befitting God, Gabriel said: "He will reign over the house of Jacob" (Luke 1:33). For he called the Church "the house of Jacob", recalling ancient history and the symbol prefiguring the reality. When Esau and Jacob were in Rebecca's womb, God told her: "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples shall be separated from your body. One people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23). These two children symbolized two peoples, as the Lord declared. Esau prefigured the people of the Synagogue—being the firstborn and the first to acknowledge God. Hence, he was "red and hairy" (Gen. 25:25), outwardly splendid but coarse and blinded by his hair, unable to gaze purely and perfectly upon God. Jacob, however, prefigured the people of the Church—those from the Gentiles who, though later in time, recognized Christ and grasped the heel of the Synagogue's unbelief, holding fast to faith. Thus, let us hold fast to the confession of one Lord Jesus Christ, one Son, one incarnate nature of God the Word, against those who divide Him. To Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

**HOMILY 3 ON THE TRIAL OF JONAH.** TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Missing)... as in the words of the psalmist who sings to God, who is above all creation: “You shine wondrously from the eternal mountains” (Ps. 76:5). But to the adversaries, as in Jeremiah, the Lord speaks at length to the Slanderer, the leader of their faction, saying: “Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, you who destroy all the earth” (Jer. 51:25). And likewise these words: “I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever” (Jon. 2:7), though they do not at all apply to Jonah, I will rightly apply them to Christ, who “shattered the gates of bronze and broke the bars of iron” (Ps. 107:16). Indeed, the gatekeepers of Sheol trembled when they saw Him (Job 38:17), and He said to those in chains, “Come out”, and to those in darkness, “Be revealed” (Isa. 49:9), as Job and the prophet Isaiah proclaimed. Likewise, the words spoken by Jonah, “Let my life rise up from corruption” (Jon. 2:7), must also be applied to Christ, of whom it is written: “His soul was not abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption” (Acts 2:31; cf. Ps. 16:10; Acts 13:35, 37).

Let no one examine these words to understand how Jonah remained uncorrupted after three days and nights in the belly of the whale. For when you hear the Lord speak of the “sign of Jonah the prophet” (Matt. 12:39), do not seek to explain the miracle by natural reasoning, for it ceases to be a sign if you explain it by natural causes. Indeed, it is the nature of miracles and extraordinary events to surpass the natural order. Otherwise, if we do not concede this, I will declare even the miracle of the resurrection of Emmanuel to be false. What then do those blinded by the wretched vanity of imagination say to this? If, on the one hand, the figure of Jonah is real—that a man consubstantial with us was swallowed and vomited by the whale without being corrupted or diminished—and if, on the other hand, it is only in imagination that our Lord became man, that He seemed to bear the cross for us and descended even to the gates of Sheol, how is it not ridiculous that the reality is the figure of imagination? On the contrary, we must see that figures, on the one hand, serve as likenesses and obscure images, and on the other hand, what is shown in figures is an entirely real event. But you say that the Word of God obtained flesh from heaven. Adam, who sinned and needed healing, was earthly, formed from the dust from which we too were made (Job 4:19), as the book of Job says. Either concede that the first Adam, who fell into sin, was heavenly—or if you

do not concede this (for it is absurd)—then you must confess that the Word of God, who is heavenly and eternal, hypostatically united Himself to flesh of the same race as Adam and consubstantial with us. For this reason, He is also called the "second Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), and He appeared on earth and dwelt among men (Bar. 3:38) to raise us up to heaven. He is the one of whom Job also cried out in advance, indicating both the figure of Jonah and his victory over the Slanderer, saying: "But let him curse it who is to slay the great sea monster" (Job 3:8). Therefore, having savored such profit from the divine doctrines, following the words of our Lord and the story of Jonah, let us also burn with zeal for His virtue, be vigilant, and persevere unceasingly in prayer. For where did Jonah pray and exercise this continual devotion, if not when he was enclosed in the belly of the whale and implored God (Jon. 2:2)? Let us also practice this praiseworthy exercise, so that whenever we are swallowed by trials, as by a whale, we may be delivered through prayer, by the grace, mercy, and love of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be praise with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 4 ON THE READING FROM LUKE BEFORE THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY DELIVERED ON THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY, DECEMBER 16, 512. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Just as the light of day, when it rises, first illuminates the faces of those who look upon it—preparing them to behold the sun's full splendor, lest their eyes, emerging from darkness, be dazzled by its sudden rays and shut their lids, deprived of the delight of light—so too, now that the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4:2) is about to dawn upon us through His Nativity in the flesh, and the day is at hand, the order of the feast decrees that on this day of the Nativity, we herald Christ our Savior with the trumpet of the Gospel, through the readings now proclaimed. This purifies in advance the eyes of our mind, so that, prepared, we may receive the light of Christ's coming in the flesh and discern how the divine Luke introduces and prepares us for these mysteries. He says: "The Gospel was fulfilled by those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word" (Luke 1:2). What do you say? Do you call the apostles "eyewitnesses and ministers of God the Word"? How, tell me, did they see Him who is incorporeal and invisible? Because—apart from sin (Heb. 4:15)—He hypostatically united to Himself flesh consubstantial with us, with a rational soul, formed from the Holy Spirit and the ever-virgin Mary, the Mother of God. Thus, He could be seen, touched, and measured. So too Paul says that "He was manifested in the flesh, seen by angels" (1 Tim. 3:16). Likewise, John the Thunderer exclaims in his epistle: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled—the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). If, then, this Word who was seen and touched is proclaimed because of His essential union with the body—a union without confusion or division—and if it is likewise written that "the Son of Man descended from heaven" (John 3:13), though He became flesh from the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, consubstantial with us, how can we not speak of one Emmanuel? He is united from two natures, divinity and humanity, into an unbreakable unity, not known in two natures by their operations and properties. For if the two remained separate after the union, the union would be torn apart. This One, formed from two into one, does not confuse those He unites, for He is united immutably and remains one unchangeably, even if duality is denied after the union.

For this reason, the Word was seen and touched. Because He became flesh without change, what is bodily in Him is seen and touched. He received His properties to be inscribed in them. It is not because He was seen that He exists; rather, because He became, He was seen. And because He became and was seen, He also suffered in the flesh (1 Pet. 4:1), enduring the cross for us, yet remaining impassible in His sufferings. This is nothing like the impious Tome of Leo, who declared at the Council of Chalcedon: “Let us attribute to each nature what belongs to it, and let us say that each operates according to its own properties.” For just as the Word, who cannot be touched or seen, was seen and touched, so too He who healed walked on the sea. Shall we say, then, that walking on water is the “property” of divinity? Those who divide the natures after the union will reply: “It is divine.” But how is it a property of divinity to walk with bodily feet, and not of humanity? And how is it not foreign to man to walk on liquid surfaces? Then you must invent a third nature to account for such an operation! For from these two natures... “(gap)” The Evangelist cries: “We have seen His glory, glory as of the Only-Begotten from the Father” (John 1:14). The Only-Begotten has glory “by nature” in the Father’s essence, not as a participated grace given to righteous men. He is “full of grace and truth” because it belongs to God to bestow such grace—to forget our malice and save us who had sinned. Therefore, as we prepare for the feast, let us purify our minds through these readings. Let us receive the light of Christ’s coming, not with disputations, but with faith—faith that passes into deeds. For the mystery is beyond speech, yet it is proclaimed for our salvation. To Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

## HOMILY 5 ON THE PIERCED SIDE OF CHRIST. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Since the rib taken from the first-formed Adam—that same rib which became Eve—proved to be the origin of evil for us by receiving the serpent's deception, therefore Emmanuel, who for our sake is called the second Adam, after His voluntary suffering on the cross, permitted His side to be pierced by a soldier's spear. In this way, He restored the woman who had been formed from that place, transforming her from weakness into manly courage for the contests of piety, and granting her a share in His own strength. From her also He gave us the firstfruits of immortality. For after breathing His last and experiencing death in the flesh—through which He made death itself dead—He allowed His side to be wounded. From it flowed forth that marvelous fountain of blood and water, which becomes for us the cause of incorruption. Thus He showed that from the very place where death had taken its beginning, there immortality had now blossomed forth. The blood and water poured out from Christ's side signify the divine mysteries: The blood represents the life-giving Eucharist, and the water symbolizes the cleansing of baptism. Just as Eve was taken from Adam's side while he slept, so the Church—the new Eve—was born from Christ's side as He slept in death. This is the great exchange: where death entered through a woman, now life pours forth through the new Adam. The spear that wounded became the instrument of healing, the sword that pierced became the scalpel of salvation. Let us then approach with confidence these life-giving streams flowing from our Savior's side. As the prophet Ezekiel saw water flowing from the temple that gave life to the dead sea (Ezekiel 47), so now the true Temple, Christ's body, pours forth rivers of living water. To Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

## HOMILY 6 THE ASCETIC LIFE AND THE REMEMBRANCE OF DEATH. TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Fragment 1)
The boundary that marks the true ascetic life is this: constant meditation on death and the soul's departure from the body. For whoever keeps this remembrance ever before his eyes will neither sin nor be enslaved by passions.

(Fragment 2)
Nothing purifies the intellect so powerfully as the fear of eternal punishment decreed for sinners. This fear restrains us, turning us away from sin. When shameful passions arise, we remain free through a conscience now cleansed of evil, while our soul rejoices in festival. What makes the soul truly rejoice? When no accusation lies against it. For when this holy profession drives out passionate desire and cleanses the disposition that had spread through the soul, then indeed the soul keeps festival, exulting in God, made radiant through confidence and communion with Him. To possess a purified mind and blameless conscience—this is the true feast.

(Fragment 3)
The athlete of piety must train himself in three things: constant remembrance of the coming judgment, immediate confession of sinful thoughts, and unceasing prayer with tears. For just as rain cleanses the air of dust, so tears cleanse the soul of passions. The monk who weeps over his sins is like a vine watered at its roots—his spiritual fruits multiply abundantly. But the dry soul, like parched earth, brings forth only thorns and thistles. Let the fire of Gehenna be always before your eyes, and you will not stumble. The children of this world fear temporal rulers and their tortures—how much more should we fear the eternal Judge? A servant who displeases his master may suffer for a day, but who can endure the wrath of the Almighty? Therefore, brothers, let us keep watch over our souls as those who must give account. The remembrance of death is a golden chain restraining us from every evil. Through it may we be found worthy of the heavenly kingdom, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

## HOMILY 7 ON THE NATIVITY, THAT IS, THE MANIFESTATION, AND ALSO ON THE MARTYR SAINT STEPHEN. TABLE OF CONTENTS

At the sight of your illustrious assembly, I rejoice and exult within myself. But I truly do not know if anyone among you—permit me to speak with your indulgence—has received a spirit worthy of this present solemnity. For what spirit is vast enough and free enough from the clouds of passions to be capable, through contemplation, of approaching these inaccessible subjects as they deserve, to have sufficient desire for them, and, even if it has this desire, to be illuminated merely by the wonder of this dawning day and to receive even a single ray of the Nativity of Christ in the flesh? Indeed, from the perspective of the entire divine Economy, it is not even possible for the angels—much less for us who are mired in mud—to consider that, in honor of Him who is timeless, without beginning, and uncreated, we celebrate the feast of the Nativity, and—what is even more astonishing—that the same feast is called the Manifestation of God. So much so that I dare to ask the reason why He who does not become has become. For although He is the Word, He became flesh without changing what He was—the Word—and in addition, He assumed the condition of becoming man. Let us learn from these two names why He humbled Himself to a birth in the flesh: it was so that God might appear to men, as the divine prophet David had foretold when he said: “God will come visibly, our God, and He will not keep silent” (Ps. 49:3). The words “God will come visibly” clearly show that He who cannot be seen—for “no one has ever seen God” (John 1:18), as John says—became visible to bodily eyes. And the words “He will not keep silent” indicate that human nature and our race were acting wickedly and had fallen into deep abysses of malice, to the point where there was no impious act that did not make them bow their heads in submission, even to the point of prostrating themselves before carved stones, venerating and worshiping wood or stone, and calling gods those lifeless and senseless things. But God the Word, although we had come to deserve contempt and silence, so that no sign of His providence was manifested—because our malice had destroyed trust—nevertheless, in His inherent gentleness, did not turn away from us or remain silent. Instead, He came visibly and healed the nature that was sick. Now, He came and descended to us not by moving from one place to another—for how could He, who is present everywhere, fills the universe, and is not contained by anything, but rather contains all things?—but while remaining wholly in God and in the Father,

He was the same, wholly in the womb of the Virgin, and He also consented to be grasped, though by nature He remains ungraspable. As for the "how," words cannot explain it. For those who proclaimed the Gospel transmitted the wonder but were not tasked with explaining the "how." For the one who said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1), also said this: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Having thus far affirmed His proclamation with these words, and lacking the means to explain the manner, he instead proposed faith—not a wordless faith nor one that clings only to words, but one that is manifested in deeds and confirmed by the brilliance of actions. For what did he say? “We have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). It is as if he were saying: "The fact that the Word became flesh without change is for us the sign and the manifest, very clear proof that we have seen His glory with our own eyes and have seen Him perform wonders worthy of God and heal the sicknesses of our nature." Indeed, when He rebuked the sea and the winds (cf. Matt. 8:26), when He transformed the elements by His will alone, and when He gave eyes to the man born blind (John 9), creating them not from nature but from nothing, He showed Himself to be the Author of this universe, the Lord of nature, and truly God who became man without change out of His love—and not the opposite, as in the absurdities of Nestorius, who claimed that, being a man and having grown in perfection, He leaped up to the honors of divinity, like the gods fabricated by pagan myths. For the evangelist exclaims: “We have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Now, the only Son has glory in Himself by the essence and nature of the Father, not as one of the righteous men, by participation or as by a portion of grace and gift, acquiring something obtainable. Rather, because glory befits God, He was full of grace and truth. For it truly belongs to God to grant such grace, to not remember our malice against us, and to save us who had sinned and become ungrateful. Indeed, “by grace we have been saved through faith, and this is not from ourselves; it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8-9), as Paul says. Is it not an immense gift, surpassing the most abundant favors, that He grants us: the fact of coming into existence, having brought us out of nothingness by mingling the divine image with mud—I mean, a soul endowed with intelligence? Then, because of malice, we descended into corruption and were condemned to death. But how did He turn our defeat into a cause of success—something even more remarkable?

For He not only made us return and rise back into existence but, in His overflowing abundance, also gave us a better state. The image having been covered by mud and filth, He united the creature that we are to His own divinity, came to the aid of this image, and raised the flesh with Him to heaven, so that the best in us might receive power, as well as that which, because of Him, had been bound with Him from the beginning. Thus, He brought to perfection this superior, rational living being, man. What He had wisely fashioned at the beginning, He took up again with even greater wisdom. For at first, He formed Adam from the earth and breathed into him the breath of life (Gen. 2:7), giving him a rational soul and rendering him capable of perfection and all wisdom—this is the mark of being in the image of God. But after the fall from Paradise and the loss of immortal life, Adam knew his wife, and then this carnal commerce and mingling of emission, more fitting for animals than for rational men, was introduced, sending us to corruption and death, yet ensuring the continuation of the race.

Proceeding then with such wisdom and love for mankind, what does Emmanuel do? He unites two natures into one being: I mean the creature honored with the grace of immortality (the soul) and the one bound to corruption (the body), in this birth arising from union. He who at the beginning had fashioned man from the earth was Himself fashioned as a little child from the Virgin, taking flesh from the Holy Spirit and from her. This flesh is consubstantial with ours, animated by a rational soul. And this was not accomplished through sleep, desire, or the emission of human seed (cf. Wis. 7:2). The hallmark of our first creation was a coming into the flesh without seed, but the hallmark of this second way of coming into existence for us is to come entirely from the woman. Likewise, the conception occurred according to the ordinary time, “for the days were fulfilled for her to give birth” (Luke 2:6). The sacred book says of the Mother of God that it was the result of marriage, yet it began without the experience of carnal union and was accomplished in virginity, for after the birth, the seal of virginity remained inviolate. For in all that brought us corruption, He mixed seeds of immortality. The entire logic of the Economy aimed at seizing corruption, stopping it, making it recede, and causing it to disappear through immortality. But it is time for me to say and cry out these words of David: “Who will declare the powers of the Lord, who will make all His praises heard?” (Ps. 106:2). For this birth, worthy of God and surpassing all wonder, exceeds all limits, so that afterward it will be said that this

vision and encounter cannot be expressed in words and are inaccessible to thought. Isaiah, that mighty-voiced trumpet of the prophets, proclaimed it in advance when, as a master, he silenced those who dispute and rebel against the greatness of the wonder, saying: “A voice of uproar from the city, a voice from the temple, the voice of the Lord, rendering recompense to His enemies. Before she was in labor, she gave birth; before her pain came upon her, she was delivered of a male child” (Isa. 66:6-7). "Let what I must prophesy be heard," he says. "This uproar resembles that of a city moderating its voice for the ears of listeners. Yet, though it can be heard, it is ineffable, for it is the voice from the temple." Now, what is brought forth or revealed from the temple, from its inner sanctuary and the Holy of Holies—as the divine book says—is in some way mysterious, inaccessible, or difficult for human minds to grasp and impossible to explain, except as a voice and a mighty, unspeakable proclamation rising against those disposed to contention and disobedience, giving them their due. But what is this voice and proclamation? “Before she was in labor, she gave birth; before her pain came upon her, she was delivered of a male child” (Isa. 66:7). "I see," he says, "the womb about to give birth, hastening to bring forth, and so I call the one who conceived 'mother.' But, I know not how, while anticipating the pains of childbirth, she escaped the ordinary limits of nature to deliver a male child. And the seal of virginity remains inviolate even after the birth." Therefore, the prophet, marveling in his spirit at this wonder, adds these words, exclaiming: “Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things?” (Isa. 66:8). One might rightly ask how the prophet can marvel at something astonishing simply because she bore a male child. For there is nothing unusual or foreign to nature here, since many other women have borne male children, and even now we see women giving birth to them. But it must be understood that even this is not without wonder, and this word was not spoken casually but with great purpose. For since our nature became effeminate and lost its vigor, and since death, following Adam’s transgression, reigned over all men (cf. Rom. 5:14), no male was born who could vigorously resist sin to the point of uprooting it. Thus, strictly speaking, only females and effeminate beings were born. Only Emmanuel was truly born a male child, overthrowing the tyranny of the Slanderer. For He raised mortal man to manhood, as well as our nature, which was paralyzed and weakened, so that men might take courage in the struggles for religion and stand boldly against the one who oppressed them from the beginning. Therefore, let the Jew be ashamed, let the pagan blush, seeing the virginal birth

proclaimed by the prophets and attested by fulfilled events. But what shall I feel, seeing this discourse extend beyond measure, when here there is only a ray of Christ's coming in the flesh, as I have said? I will pass over Bethlehem, the census, the swaddling clothes, the manger, the star's journey, the gifts, the adoration of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, the return from Egypt, Herod's murderous plot, his armed assault against infants, driving him to madness so that he no longer knew whom he sought to kill. Each of these subjects calls for explanation and demonstrates divine thoughts. Though I wish to speak of all, I will omit them to avoid excess, loving these matters so much that I give occasion for victory to Him who has overcome the world (cf. John 16:33).

As for you, since you have delighted in these words, when you go home and prepare your table, delight in these same words. Thus, by the pleasure of the spirit, you will silence the pleasure of the belly. Let this entire feast day, truly governed by reason, be set apart and consecrated to God the Word, who became incarnate for us. But you ought to dedicate your whole life, as did Stephen, the first martyr, who shed his own blood and won the martyr's crown. For this too is the work of God's wisdom, deeper than all things, which through His ways proclaims what is invisible and hidden: that Stephen—whose name means "crown"—is the leader of the band in the first sacred contest. By his name and the proof he gave in his own person, he showed those who would compete for the same crown that they would receive it in the kingdom of heaven, though it had already shone forth before the contests. I omit to say that in this—coming so close to the likeness of Christ—no martyr can rival him. First, because being the first to suffer for Christ is a perfection without equal. Second, by his excellent and divine discourse (cf. Acts 7:1-53), he led the Jews not to remain fixed and blinded by the letter but to understand the Law and the prophets spiritually, showing clearly that it was not a mere man they crucified, as they thought, but the Word who became flesh and man for us, the God of the Law and the prophets. Then, rapt in spirit by contemplation and fixing his gaze on heaven (Acts 7:55), he left the earth and, while still on earth, saw the One of whom he was a witness, clinging to Him and wholly mingled with Him. He denied that He was merely a man, even as he was stoned under a hail of stones, speaking words worthy of God. For those he reproached, he called "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears" (Acts 7:51), and he prayed for them, saying: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60), resembling in this the

One who, to those crucifying Him, cried out at the height of His passion: “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34). For what else should he do, who saw Jesus, but speak the words of Jesus? Just as painters who depict portraits with colors, looking at the model, take care to reproduce nothing else on their tablets but the model before them, so too Stephen painted his own image most remarkably after the model of Jesus, as far as possible. Therefore, rewarding him for his faithful and exact imitation, God placed the commemoration of the Nativity close to his feast. May it also obtain for us, who are so far away because of our sins—”for your sins have separated you from your God” (Isa. 59:2), as the prophet says—that we may all be brought near to Him, purified by repentance, since He can do all things, and nothing is impossible for Him (cf. Luke 1:37). To Him be praise, glory, and power, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 8 ON THE INNOCENT CHILDREN MASSACRED BY HEROD IN BETHLEHEM. TABLE OF CONTENTS

You are utterly astonished by the senseless order of Herod against the innocent little children, who were indeed still at the breast—an order that delivered a detestable sentence of death. Yet do not be astonished, for it was an act of madness. Therefore, the divine and sacred book of the Gospels, revealing the irrationality of the one who gave the order, says: “He was enraged, and it adds: greatly.” It was anger, it says, that pronounced the sentence, and anger that seized his thoughts. What then could anger produce but madness, the shedding of blood, and the fury of wild beasts? But at these words, someone might say: "It is indeed a good answer that, when questioned about the reason and cause of the massacre of the children by Herod, you attributed it to the madness born of anger. But I seek to understand why Christ permitted innocent children to be slaughtered indiscriminately, making this the result of that man’s madness—or rather, an iniquitous deed. For on the one hand, when Herod sought Christ, it is clear that he could not find Him who is utterly beyond grasp and difficult to find, who willingly allowed Himself to be seized and crucified for our salvation when it was necessary and when He willed it. On the other hand, this massacre of the children was not so much a search for Christ as the culmination of a vengeful design." But it is the mark of a shortsighted and worldly mind to be troubled by the massacre of the children, as if it were an injustice done to them. Indeed, if you were imprisoned in a dark house, suffering from prolonged hunger, or even your back torn by lashes, and someone promised to lead you simply through death to a place bathed in unfading light, with incorruptible and inexhaustible food in abundance—a place rich in spiritual plants, with crowns ever blooming and never withering—would you not eagerly bow your neck beneath the sword to go to that place? And would you not call the one who struck you a benefactor, not a murderer? How does this world, into which we have descended due to sin after the radiant life of paradise, differ from a dark house? Here we are truly entangled and ensnared in thorns—that is, in the bonds of temporal cares. Here, as if beaten with blows, we eat our bread by the sweat of our brow to acquire virtue through such painful discipline. How then were these children wronged? While Herod, because of the infamous massacre he ordered, suffered punishment—and suffered it more severely—they were in reality delivered at once from a wretched life and passed swiftly to a blessed and eternal

end. If our condition were limited to this present world, then it would be time for us to say with Paul: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But if Christ has risen from the dead, He is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” The rewards of virtue and the punishments of iniquity—each according to what is fitting—will be measured with the just weights and scales of the world to come. In this case, the children were not treated unjustly by Christ; on the contrary, they were favored, being handed over to Herod’s massacre and weaving the crowns of martyrdom—crowns that Peter, the chief of the apostles, earned only after much sweat when he was crucified upside down; that Paul and James earned when they were struck by the sword; and that Stephen, the first martyr, earned when he was stoned.

For my part, I often marvel at the gifts, so worthy of God, of Christ’s coming in the flesh, because through the slaughter of these children, He also shows that the human race, which had descended to an imperfect and childlike state, is restored and raised to the perfection of the beginning. For at the beginning, He formed Adam as a perfect being, not brought to growth through successive ages. Immediately, He entrusted him with the cultivation of paradise, setting the reward of immortality before him. But because Adam descended into death and, through deception, fell, was cast out of paradise, and rejected perfection, the manner of our coming into existence through marriage was introduced. Then, because man is born as a small child, this inferiority shows the lack of perfection in his beginnings. And through successive growth and the progress of ages, it shows that we are destined for corruption. But Emmanuel, the author and physician of our nature, on the one hand took upon Himself our imperfection, becoming a small child without change out of His love; on the other hand, He bestowed upon children and our race the perfection that existed at the beginning—or rather, His own perfection, which is wholly divine. For He calls them to the struggles of martyrdom, worthy of men. Therefore, He also cries out in the Gospels, making known that He came for this purpose: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” How far, then, will the folly of Nestorius go, who shamelessly says of God incarnate: "I am ashamed to call God a small child of two or three months"? For if He Himself were ashamed to be called a small child, He would first blush—and rightly so—at having become a man without change for our sake. But if, on the one hand, He takes upon Himself the imperfection of a child for the sake of the divine plan, and

on the other hand, He makes children partakers of His perfection and grants them the perfection of martyrs when they bear witness to Him as God—for their blood cries out with a voice louder than the blood of Abel—how can you, because of this childlike age, dishonor Him who, even at that age, does marvelously what is worthy of God? How can you divide this One into two natures, blasphemously calling Him a small child and the Lord of the small child, while attributing to these two natures a union of affinity and presenting one as Lord and the other as subject to that Lord? Likewise, in the flight into Egypt, about which you again divide Him in two because you are ashamed of His voluntary self-emptying, what is fitting for God is mingled: He makes the idols of Egypt tremble, puts demons to flight, and transforms that land, which He had entrusted to Pharaoh, a blasphemer who fought against God, bringing it to the sublime knowledge of God and the orthodox faith that reigns there even now. To this, what does the impious Eutyches reply—he who drank the troubled dregs of the impious Valentinus, the Manichaeans, and Apollinaris? For if it was not a body consubstantial with us (except without sin), possessing a rational soul, that the Word of God united to Himself hypostatically, then the journey to Egypt was entirely superfluous. For it would have been necessary, as in the case of illusions, that He be invisible to deceive the sight of those who saw Him and escape the hands of Herod—if indeed He appeared to us in imagination and assumed a celestial or aerial body, not one consubstantial with us. But this impure and godless opinion was driven far away by the angel who stood by Joseph in his sleep, saying at one time: “Arise, take the child and His mother, and flee into Egypt”, and at another: “Arise, take the child, and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” To Him, for such a benefit, render thanksgiving in His honor and in honor of the little children who bore witness in Bethlehem. According to Paul’s admonition, “do not be children in your thinking, but in malice be infants, and in your thinking be mature”, so that through Christ you may receive what is perfect on the day of His coming, terrible and glorious. To Him be praise, to Him who for us submitted to such self-emptying, so full of love, without change or illusion, now and always and unto the ages of ages! Amen!

**HOMILY 9 ON SAINTS BASIL AND GREGORY, BISHOPS DELIVERED IN THE SANCTUARY OF SAINT IGNATIUS ON JANUARY 1, 513.)**
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Just as the prophet David considered it a blessing to meditate day and night on the law of the Lord (Ps. 1:2), so too—and even more—it is a blessing for me, it seems, to bring before your minds, as if at every hour, the memory of those who lived virtuously in this world and the triumphs of those who fought for piety. Or rather, for those who reflect deeply, this too is to meditate on the law of the Lord. For whoever admires the lives of those who conducted themselves according to the Law has, in a figurative and very literal sense, admired both the Law and the Lawgiver Himself. Who, then, can we find who lived more in accordance with the Law than Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian? Their memory brings glory to the Law and the Lawgiver, and profit to us who remember them. These men were truly spiritual shepherds of a spiritual flock, stewards of the mysteries of the Spirit, and true ministers of God the Word—the Christ, our great High Priest, who bowed the heavens and came down (Ps. 18:9), taking the form of a servant without change (Phil. 2:7), becoming man without ceasing to be what He was, and who, after His voluntary self-emptying, returned to heaven in a more exalted manner. Therefore, when after the completion of His divine plan He ascended bodily to the heights, the angelic armies who honored and accompanied Him did not merely say to the spiritual powers and their fellow ministers: “Lift up your gates, O princes” (Ps. 24:7), but added these words: “Lift up, O eternal gates!” The phrase “Lift up” signifies a more sublime praise. For He did not become higher than He is in Himself—what could be added to Him who is perfect from the beginning and by nature? Could He become more perfect? Rather, it is in our minds and in all rational creation that He has come to be more exalted, having given us and the bodiless hosts a higher and more perfect knowledge of Himself. The words “Lift up, O eternal gates” (Ps. 24:7) I apply in one sense to the heavenly gates in their obvious meaning, but in another, they elevate the hearer to a higher thought. For they open and raise the intellectual gates of every rational nature, that they may receive Him who is higher—since He is exalted—and that they may think of Him in a manner more worthy of God and more sublime.

I do not know what came over me: when I prepared to praise the teachers of the Church, I somehow ended up speaking of theology and the great mystery of the divine plan. Yet, though I was led there unintentionally, I know it was not by my own doing but by a divine impulse, clearly showing that merely remembering Basil and Gregory the Theologian brings a man to perfection—just as those who approach fire must truly receive some of its warmth and light. This is what the word intended: that after imitating the humility of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, they reached the summit of perfection. They had noble birth, abundant wealth, and were trained in all the wisdom of the pagan sages—in the varied meters of grammar, in refined and distinguished speech, in eloquent discourse, persuasive rhetoric, well-founded ancient histories, the dialectic of opinions, philosophical riddles, geometric definitions, the subtle combinations of numbers, the positions and movements of the stars, and all that leads to a blind knowledge of God and a falsely assured understanding of things. Yet they counted all this as nothing (Phil. 3:8) and fell into the nets of John and Peter, those fishermen and unlearned men, and they regarded Paul, the tentmaker (Acts 18:3), as the teacher and guide of divine words. After learning that “great is the mystery of godliness” (1 Tim. 3:16) and hearing Moses say, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4), and after recognizing through these and similar words the one Lordship and divinity in three hypostases—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—they rejected the polytheism of the pagans. And when they read, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1), they mocked the opinions of the philosophers: one saying, “Fire is the principle of this world” (Heraclitus), another, “It is water” (Thales), and a third, “It is some other element.” But as for astronomy—the science of the stars—they held it to be true and sure insofar as it leads from the beauty of visible things to their Creator. By it, the divine David, contemplating the God of the universe, said: “He counts the number of the stars and calls them all by name. Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite” (Ps. 147:4-5). This is not like the vain astrologers who, from the wandering motions of the stars, weave fate and fixed destiny, predicting births and future events, depriving us of God’s providence and governance.

After engaging in these and similar studies, Basil and Gregory—I take pleasure in repeating their names—lived the "philosophic" (monastic) life while still under their teachers in Athens itself, where the worship of demons flourished and the

doctrines of error abounded. They trampled on demon-worship and overthrew the pride of the pagans, exposing the contradictions and weakness of their godless teachings. Then, after tasting the cup of true Wisdom, thirsting for it more, being filled abundantly with this drink, and becoming intoxicated with a praiseworthy ecstasy that banished all sleep, they subdued the flesh through ascetic labors, restrained the fiery and untamable passions of youth with the bridle of chastity, and trained themselves in every practice of perfection. Thus, they ascended to the heights of contemplation. When they received, in addition to the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge (1 Cor. 12:8)—truly magnificent gifts of the Spirit—they became rivers of living water (John 7:38), flowing from their hearts according to the promise of our Savior. And He who does not allow cities set on the mountain of perfection to be hidden (Matt. 5:14), nor a lamp to be placed under a basket (Matt. 5:15), after drawing the great Basil into the desert and monastic life, raised him to the episcopal throne of Caesarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia. From there, Basil flooded the whole earth with his teachings, sending forth streams from a single source, unceasingly flowing. To those in the church, he expounded the Scriptures; to those afar, he sent letters. He applied catechesis to the words of Genesis, teaching the wisdom in the works of their Maker. He taught theology, silenced the inventors of godless heresies, and refuted them—sometimes in public debate, with words from his tongue like arrows from a bow; other times, with written responses that cut through the knots they thought impossible to untie, as easily as Samson broke the bonds of the Philistines (Judg. 15:14).

But Gregory, the true Theologian, was entrusted with the small city of Nazianzus in Cappadocia. Not only did he consider himself unworthy even of it, but he fled the honor of the episcopacy—not measuring it by the city's size but knowing that this authority is one and equal in honor for all who hold the sacred office, whether over a great city or a small one. He left it to the unlearned and the very fleshly. But when the impiety of Arius raged—teaching that the only-begotten Word of God, begotten timelessly and incorporeally as Word by the Father, was a creature and introducing a new god as maker of worlds and time—and when Macedonius extended this madness to the Holy Spirit, Gregory was sent by God to Constantinople, where the plague of these destructive heresies thrived. He who took David from behind the sheep to shepherd Jacob His servant and Israel His inheritance (Ps. 78:71) also led Gregory from the modest flock of Nazianzus to the

imperial city. There, after clothing him with the full armor of the Spirit (Eph. 6:13), bringing him into the cloud like Moses (Ex. 20:21), and strengthening his tongue with the fire of theology, He made every heretical ear and mind tremble at the lofty marvel of his discourses on divine doctrines. Who, hearing the only-begotten Son of God say to the apostles, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19), would dare to divide the one essence and divinity of the three hypostases? If there is not one divinity for the three, then there is not one faith or one baptism (Eph. 4:5). If the Father is neither created nor made, but the Son is created, and the Holy Spirit a servant, then they are both created and subject to the Father as Creator. But how can He who is by nature free and unenslaved count slaves—that is, the Son and the Holy Spirit—as equal to Himself in honor? With such words, Gregory the eloquent Theologian triumphed not only over the heresies of Arius and Macedonius but over all heresies, like a valiant gardener who, as soon as thorns sprout, applies the sickle and diligently sharpens it. For us and all who come after, this suffices to cut down whatever new errors may arise. But he was the first champion and wrestler in Christ's fold, laboring for ten years in the imperial city—first in a humble house, speaking to the few who were orthodox, converting many heretics, enduring persecutions, being stoned often, and finally being forcibly enthroned by the faithful. Are we then worthy to loose the sandals of such men—or even to tread the ground they walked on? We who burn with ambition for the first seats and honors (Matt. 23:6), who boast loudly of apostolic thrones, who lift our heads high, puff out our cheeks, spit freely, and walk on tiptoe? Some of us even disdain to tread the earth, riding instead on fine donkeys like chariots, with crowds escorting us—not to mention the flatteries we daily indulge in. The great name of honesty is despised; piety is suspected and counted an insult. Success means crawling into public favor, only to be condemned soon after. Like earthly kings, we aspire to titles befitting only divinity.

Therefore, I do not generally seek this office for utility or propriety, nor can I, as is commonly thought, pride myself on so exalted a seat. Rather, I lament within myself that I bear no trace of apostolic perfection. I tremble not at touching this holy throne but at suffering while seated upon it. Let him who would glory in apostolic honors and jurisdictions conduct himself as an apostle and burn with zeal for the faith amid dangers. Otherwise, let him be mocked, for he wears a lion's skin

but is a tomb full of dead bones, whitewashed only on the outside (Matt. 23:27). How shall I, seated on the throne of Ignatius the God-bearer, attain his stature? Does water differ from fire? My lax life is nothing like his fervent, heavenly one. I say nothing of Hippolytus, that bishop and martyr, whose perfection Rome sent us as a reward for Antioch's aid when Ignatius went there, suffered martyrdom, and strengthened the Christians. Let us flee vain glory, brothers, and at all times know ourselves. "For those who know themselves are wise", as the proverb says. Let us despise the fleeting honors of this world and look to those that are eternal. Behold Basil and Gregory: they scorned transient honors, and considering themselves unworthy of the honor of Him in whom they believed, they escaped them here—and became bishops and teachers of the whole world. You see how our propensity for violent speech is again restrained. Leaving behind encomiums, we turn to teaching reform in life and self-knowledge. But do not fear what is dear to those praised, who consider such praise their own and a means of progress. May we all attain this, in all things, by the grace and love of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 10 ON THE EPIPHANY. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Again, it is the feast of God and Savior Jesus Christ, and again the restoration of our race. He was born for the first time according to the flesh, sharing my manner of birth—He who is without seed and without sin, who knows all things before they exist. The mothers were freed from the first sentence pronounced against them by Eve, receiving the word: “In pain you shall bring forth sons” (Gen. 3:16), as a rebuke for the bitter taste and disobedience. Indeed, the angel announced to the shepherds, saying: “I bring you good news of great joy for all the world: today a Savior is born to you, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David” (Luke 2:10–11). But with the pain, the curse of our first father Adam was also destroyed. The Mother of God, the Virgin, heard: “Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you” (Luke 1:28), and also: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (Luke 1:42). The blessing removes the curse. Furthermore, “Jesus grew in age, wisdom, and grace” (Luke 2:52)—He who is Wisdom itself and gives wisdom and grace to all, so that in Him, as the second firstfruits of our race, we may rise again toward grace and wisdom, from which we had fallen after being deceived by the serpent. To what could He, who is beyond all progress, the final and unattainable limit of existence, progress? But what the evangelist called progress is the gradual manifestation and revelation of His divinity, made known in relation to His age and measure. For this reason, He joined age with wisdom and grace, declaring that if He—who is ageless, timeless, and eternal—had not subjected Himself to age and time after becoming man for us, we would not say that He progressed in wisdom and grace. But because He truly progressed in age, He also progressed in wisdom and grace, appropriating our imperfection and leading us to His perfection. Thus, the divinity of the Economy of Emmanuel, revealed gradually, is called progress. When His mother—I speak of the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary—and Joseph returned from Jerusalem after the Passover feast and sought Him on the way (Luke 2:41–45), after He had willingly withdrawn from His companions, they returned to Jerusalem and found Him. He said to them: “Why were you searching for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49). By this, He made it known that He and the Father are one divinity and Lordship, and that the child they sought as one who had strayed was the very one who rules over all the Father’s affairs, including the city of Jerusalem, which the prophets called “the city of God” (Ps. 87:3). After

recounting this, the evangelist Luke added: “Jesus also progressed in wisdom and age and grace” (Luke 2:52), so that we might learn that He called progress the gradual revelation of Jesus’ divinity. For He who possesses all that belongs to the Father—what increase could He receive? Yet He seemed to progress “before God and men” (Luke 2:52), as a divine understanding of Him grew among men, which He manifested by the Father’s will, revealing His divinity in due time. In the same way, He comes to the Jordan and to baptism—not because He needed purification, but to purify and sanctify the waters for me in advance. He stands with those baptized for repentance—He who baptizes “with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:11), purifies from sin, and grants the grace of adoption. That He had no need for Himself when baptized for us, John made clear when he cried out: “I need to be baptized by You, and You come to me?” (Matt. 3:14). If the Baptist needed purification from the One being baptized, then He was without need and had in Himself the fullness of grace. See also Jesus’ reply: “Let it be so now” (Matt. 3:15). He restrained John, who had begun to proclaim the sublimity and inaccessibility of His divinity, saying: “Now is the time of the Economy, not of manifestation.” For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15). Now I complete the full measure of voluntary humility, concealing the sublimity of My nature and fulfilling all righteousness. What does “fulfill all righteousness” mean? He was to let the practice of the Law rest—not by abolishing it (Matt. 5:17) or opposing it, but by making it fade in the brightness of the Gospel’s commandments. For while the Law says: “You shall not murder” (Ex. 20:13), He commands: “Do not even be angry” (Matt. 5:22), so that when anger—the root of murder—is removed, the law against murder becomes unnecessary. Similarly, “You shall not commit adultery” (Ex. 20:14) is preempted by: “Do not look with lust” (Matt. 5:28). Because He was to let the Law rest through the more perfect legislation of the Gospel—lest anyone say He set it aside as if He could not fulfill it—He fulfilled all its precepts: He underwent circumcision (Luke 2:21; Gen. 17:10; Lev. 12:3), He was presented with a pair of turtledoves (Luke 2:24), and He fulfilled all that was in the Law (Luke 2:39). Therefore, seeing the Pharisees and Sadducees coming eagerly to John’s baptism (Matt. 3:7), He joined them, not despising this humiliation but willing to fulfill all righteousness. Yet He who fulfilled all righteousness had no need of the baptism of repentance. Moreover, He aimed to inaugurate the perfect and true baptism of adoption, which He would grant us. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29)

descended into the waters and was baptized. He broke the power of the Slanderer, who ruled over the waters and the armies of evil, as David foretold: “You crushed the heads of the dragons in the waters” (Ps. 74:13–14). Demons love to dwell in damp places, as does the Slanderer, their prince. Therefore, the one who spoke to Job said of the Slanderer: “Under every green tree he lies, by the reeds and papyrus” (Job 40:21–22)—plants that grow in water. David the Psalmist spoke of this in prayer, foretelling the appearance of the great God, Christ: Lord, bow the heavens and come down; touch the mountains, and they will smoke. Flash forth lightning and scatter them; send out Your arrows and rout them. Stretch out Your hand from on high and deliver me from the great waters, from the hand of foreigners” (Ps. 144:5–7). “He who prepares mercy and truth” (Ps. 144:5–7) heard: “He bowed the heavens and came down” (Ps. 18:9)—lowering His heavenly glory to be accessible to those on earth. “He touched the mountains”—the principalities and powers of this dark world (Eph. 6:12)—and they vanished like smoke. “He flashed lightning”—the brightness of the Gospel preaching—and scattered them. “He sent His arrows”—the prophecies of the prophets, joined by the apostles’ teachings—and routed His enemies. All this would not align unless the hand itself—the mighty arm of the invisible Father, the only-begotten Son, the Word incarnate—had first been stretched out. After sanctifying the waters of the Jordan, He submerged the torrent of sin and saved us “from the great waters, from the hand of foreigners” (Ps. 144:7). The prophet David placed this at the end to summarize God’s benefits, which had sprung from Him. Because this is so, and because Jesus descended to the Jordan for this reason, when He rose from the waters, “the heavens were opened” (Matt. 3:16), closed by the first Adam, and He showed that the power of baptism is to ascend to heaven. For this heavenly One accomplished all things for us, becoming our firstfruits for our sanctification and salvation. The Spirit also descended on Him for our sake. This Spirit is not one of the ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14) but the Spirit of God, consubstantial and co-reigning with Him and the Father. The evangelist demonstratively said: “The Spirit of God” (Matt. 3:16)—the Spirit who had left the human race, of whom the Lord God said: “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh” (Gen. 6:3). But this merciful One, by the abundance of His grace, as if revising His own decrees, abolished this sentence for us. After becoming flesh without change, He drew the Spirit to the flesh when He united His divinity to the condemned creature and thus sent grace to our entire race. “He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove”

(Matt. 3:16), to show clearly that the God of the Old and New Testaments is one and to recall the flood in Noah's days. Just as a dove announced the calming of God's wrath then, so now the form of a dove proclaims the flood of sin and the reconciliation of the world. What do you say to this, you who uphold the foolish fantasies of Eutyches and the godless Manichees? If the Word of God did not hypostatically unite with flesh from our race—consubstantial with us—how would the descent of the Spirit benefit us, coming upon other firstfruits and not ours? How would grace itself pass to us—the grace by which our Savior accomplished all things—if the dough were foreign and not the same as the rest (Rom. 11:16)? How does the mention of the dove's appearance not teach you the truth of the Incarnation? The evangelists said of the Spirit's revelation at the Jordan: "He appeared like a dove" (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; John 1:32–33). Luke added: "In bodily form" (Luke 3:22). But concerning the Incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the God-Word, none of them said, "He appeared as a man", for He truly became man without change. Therefore, the Virgin Mother is mentioned, as well as the time of conception, though seedless; His birth, swaddling, nursing, circumcision, growth, eating, drinking, and other marks of voluntary self-emptying—yet without sin. "He was born of a woman, born under the Law" (Gal. 4:4). But I turn to the Father's voice from heaven: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17), which uproots the impiety of Nestorius, who divides Emmanuel into two natures after the ineffable and indivisible union. For the Father said demonstratively: "This is My Son"—the One seen by those present, not, as Nestorius says, "the One hidden in the One seen." If it were so, He would say, "In this one is My Son", not "This is My Son." By saying "This is My Son", He showed that the One seen in the flesh is the same invisible Word by nature, the true Son of the Father. The word "is" signifies truth and equality in essence, refuting Arius, who said, "There was a time when the Son was not" (Athanasius, "Against the Arians" 1.14). For God is eternal, as the voice testified when it cried in the Father's name: "This is My Son." Creatures are subject to "was" and "will be", but God is eternally "is", unlimited by past or future time. The words "beloved, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17), applied to the Economy concerning us, show the greatness of love. Though we were under sin, enemies of God, strangers to His affection, "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), "without hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12), worthy of hatred, and hating one another (Titus 3:3)—He abolished this hatred and strife, saying:

“Beloved, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17), founding His love for us first on Emmanuel. For He, the true Son loved by the Father, needed no such word, being of the same essence and will. “In whom I am well pleased”: “I have called Him beloved, sowing affection for the race of men I should have hated. If I have reason for this, it is not for any cause but because it seemed good to Me to save through Your hands those who perished.” For God rejoices most in helping and saving.

But I see that time cuts short my discourse, and you are weary—not from satiety but because the crowd struggles to hear. I must pass over John, “the voice crying in the wilderness” (John 1:23), who preceded the Word: the son of the barren one before the Son of the Virgin, the one hidden in the desert before the One who came from heaven, the one born of Zacharias before the One begotten of the Father before ages. He arose for us and taught us this feast of lights. We call this present solemnity “lights” because the three lights of the three hypostases—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—produce one illumination from one essence, revealed to us at the Jordan’s waters on this day. Who celebrated this “mystery of godliness” (1 Tim. 3:16)? John, “the greatest among those born of women” (Matt. 11:11), the last of the prophets, surpassing all in seeing the One prophesied by them, pointing Him out, and ending the prophecies. He ate no bread, drank no wine, and lived like the angels. But what shall I do? Pressed by time, shall I end the homily here? Yet I am drawn to speak of John’s perfection. But I will be silent, lest I dishonor him by speaking too briefly—or rather, wrong you by depriving you of great profit. Be afraid, for while John lived such a life, prophesying what we now experience, we indulge in pleasures. While celebrating the feast of lights, we do works of darkness (Rom. 13:12). John touched Christ’s head at His baptism, after He descended to such humility and “conversed with men” (Bar. 3:38). But you touch Him wholly with your hands daily—you know how, though I cannot speak because of the uninitiated. When do you touch Him? After the victory of the cross, the destruction of death, the resurrection, the ascent to heaven—when He comes wholly in divine manner, shining in your minds. Prepare a magnificent lodging for Him. “Wash your hands in innocence” (Ps. 26:6), as the Psalmist says, turning from every impure and wicked work. Emulate John’s abstinence and renunciation of food. Lucian, whose memory we celebrate, competed with him and won the martyr’s crown. Now, through many beggars, he abundantly feeds Christ—if you, honoring

his memory, put a few coins in their hands. The poor flock to martyrs' feasts to offer the athletes' sufferings as prayers and move you to mercy. Through them, Christ cries out: "I was hungry, and you gave Me no food; naked, and you did not clothe Me" (Matt. 25:42). Have you forgotten all My sufferings endured for you? The birth in the flesh, the descent to the Jordan, the cross, the life-giving tomb, the resurrection, the promised goods, and the immortal hopes. Be ashamed at the martyrs' struggles and the beggars' pleas, and relieve their poverty as you can. Christ tells you: Do not neglect them, brothers. Through them, we repay what we owe Him and obtain future goods by His grace and love. To Him be glory, honor, and worship with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always, forever. Amen.

## HOMILY 11 ON THE HOLY MARTYR BABYLAS. TABLE OF CONTENTS

I do not know if we would rightly be accused of lacking understanding if we were to pass over in silence Babylas, the eloquent shepherd and martyr, the man who both fulfilled in himself the words foretold by the Lord concerning those who would believe in Him and demonstrated their truth. For first, when our God and Savior Jesus Christ Himself said, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture says, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38), this Babylas was so deeply imbued with this teaching and poured forth such abundant, generous, and wisdom-filled streams of words that even the ears of adversaries, gently seduced, were inclined to listen to him. The accursed tyrant, seated on his throne before whom the martyr’s combat unfolded, became a subdued and eager listener to his teachings, whereas initially his ears were closed by the worship of demons. Next, when the Master who does not lie said to His disciples of that time, and through them to those who have lived until now and to those who will come in all future ages: “You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles” (Matthew 10:18), Babylas—truly blessed—far surpassed the meaning of these words. For he was not brought by others, but of his own will he abandoned everything for the arena of martyrdom, though he was already gray-haired, as we have heard, yet his spirit was rejuvenated by his piety. Indeed, when the tyrant suddenly sought to enter the church and fall like a wolf upon the flock of rational sheep, Babylas stood before the doors of the holy temple, immovable as an impregnable tower and a mighty rampart unshaken by the assaults of raging waves, and prevented him from entering. Taking him by the hand, as it were, he said: “You must not approach the temple, nor mark with your impure footsteps the threshold of its doors.” As I have said, he truly fulfilled all the words of the divine book at once: “The righteous are bold as a lion” (Proverbs 28:1); and this: “I will speak of Your testimonies before kings and will not be ashamed” (Psalm 119:46); and that: “The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep” (John 10:11); and all other words of this kind and like to these. Just as a woman of beautiful appearance, whose face and the beauty of her whole body give her a natural beauty, also adorns everything she wears—being herself the principal ornament, not adorned but rather illuminated by what she wears, or rather, to say what is fitting, overshadowing and extinguishing by her natural beauty the

brilliance that might come from her ornaments—so too Babylas, that great athlete of piety, already shining with the rectitude and grace of the spirit, when he clothed himself with divine words as with a radiant ornament or garment, made them appear, all together and each in particular, even brighter, bringing to light and revealing what had until then been heard only by report. And this was truly the case whether he adorned himself with a single one of these words, whichever you might choose, so that he had no need of others to make their beauty resplendent; or when he gathered them all together, reduced them to one, and applied them to himself, binding them as if framed by a crown, so that when one of them is separated from the others, the whole loses its harmony and grace—for actions, not words, require a beauty that is harmonious and complete. For my part, leaving aside all else, it is your way of teaching, more than your other talents, that fills me with admiration. For when the tyrant, in the very arena of martyrdom, was blinded by impiety and, as if mocking and laughing, said to the saint—I will recall his impious words—: "Will not your Christ be angered when He hears that you have named one God, because of what you have done?" Babylas transformed this insult into theological language, saying with unveiled face, as he contemplated the glory of the Lord as in a mirror (2 Corinthians 3:18), as Paul says: "Whenever Christians name Christ, they also confess the Father, and whenever they name the Father, they also confess the Son, for the Father is not distinct from the Son, nor the Son from the Father."

Hearing this, let the admirers and disciples of Arius blush, and let them know clearly that the faith and teaching of the apostles and martyrs acknowledges the Son as consubstantial with God the Father. For if the Son is distinct from the Father in that He is the Son, and if, on the one hand, in a particular hypostasis, so to speak, the person of the Father appears, and on the other hand, in another particular hypostasis, that of the Son is found, how then will the Father be inseparable from the Son and the Son from the Father, as the blessed Babylas said, unless it is because one thing belongs to both: essence and divinity? But perhaps you will say that it is in glory and kingship that he declared the Father and the Son inseparable. But if, according to your word, O blasphemers, the Son is a creature on the one hand, and the Father uncreated and unmade on the other, then He who is truly new and He who is before the ages are no longer of one and the same glory and inseparable. Rather, the Father will have glory that is essential and according

to nature, while the Son will receive it as by participation and as a gift of grace, not according to essence and nature. Thus, the Father also lies when He says through the prophet: “I will not give My glory to another” (Isaiah 48:11). (Missing)... Let us learn to honor the martyrs by imitating their conduct. For if we were celebrating men who were lax and effeminate, who competed only on the stage and in dancing, we would have to please them with softness, frivolous clothing, and dissolute behavior, because in these things they themselves found pleasure and joy in their lifetime. But since we celebrate the memory of God’s martyrs, reviving in our minds their perfection, let us apply ourselves to the divine things that were dear to the martyrs. And just as they honored the Word of God, who for us became incarnate, became man without change, and suffered for us in the flesh, by enduring sufferings like His, so let us also honor them by the labors of perfection that resemble theirs. Thus, the great Antony, whose memory we have joined to that of the martyr Saint Babylas, legislator, head, and teacher of ascetic monasticism—as he laid the foundations of the solitary and eremitic life, and, to speak generally, of the inaccessible life—honored the martyrs by performing actions akin and similar to theirs. And this not by standing before a judge, nor by having his ribs torn, nor by being thrown to the beasts to face combat, nor by being cast into a fiery furnace or a boiling cauldron, but by mastering his body, subduing it to enslave the flesh to the spirit, he who, at every hour, so to speak, stood before Christ, like Elijah the Tishbite who said: “As the Lord lives, before whom I stand” (1 Kings 17:1); he who was torn by demons as by executioners; who, when they transformed themselves into the appearance of wild beasts and various ghostly apparitions, remained fearless, utterly unshaken; who showed that the flame of fornication and the cauldron of pleasures are colder than all ice and snow; who bound himself with the rope of virtues, as the martyr Babylas had bound himself with a chain.

Let us too, though late, draw instruction from this. Let women cease to be drawn downward by the golden rings on their hands and feet and to make their fingers glitter with precious stones; let them be ashamed of Babylas’ chain, which is a chain of total perfection. Beware, O woman, of the voluntary bonds that you would not endure if they were made of lead and iron: yet now you gladly bear their weight because you are ensnared in spirit by the sight of gold. Set aside some of your adornments, sell them, and free Christ, who is chained and imprisoned, and

who, perhaps to pay His debts, is stretched on the rack. Then truly, then you will be regarded by all... For when you are adorned with golden ornaments and silken garments, a few look at you with pleasure, and they are but a small number; but you will be accused by many, whether they hate luxury or cannot even bear the sight of it. On the contrary, if you clothe Christ—when you free Him from bonds by paying His debt in His place, or feed Him when He is hungry, or cover Him when He is naked (Matthew 25:35-36)—and if you choose the ornament of perfection instead of golden adornments, you will turn the eyes of all spectators toward you. Turning their gaze from beautiful colors made of corruptible matter, they will marvel at your spiritual beauty, for this adorned woman is but a soulless and insensible surface, covered with lime, in my opinion. But what do I say? Will you gladden only the eyes of men? You will also gladden the choirs of angels; you will rejoice every unhypocritical eye that sees you, and you will receive from it praises that will not fade or cease. For those who practice perfection, the praises of men flow in and stop at the entrance of their ears; they are of no account. But for the proud and haughty, who pay no heed to future hopes, the things of this present world are the object of their cares, as John the Theologian also says when he writes: “All that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:16-17). It is from the chain of an apostle, the martyr Babylas, who is in every way praiseworthy, that we have gathered such instruction. But tell me, shall we pass over in silence the mother of the three young children who fought alongside their master, who were beheaded with him, and who, without dispute, transmitted by the shedding of their blood the great doctrines of piety? If no one omits to speak of her, let us not fail to venerate the zeal of these children for virtue. Though they were three in number, this did not make her hesitate in spirit, nor did she consider a solution outside of salvation and transient; rather, she exhorted them to martyrdom and sent them to the future life, without thinking to set aside one of them to be her staff in old age and to provide her with necessary nourishment. On the contrary, counting this life as death, she thought that the son who remained would be dead; and as a mother full of mercy and love for her children, she took care that all three would live the true and incorruptible life. But the mothers of today—and I will add, very rightly, the fathers as well—have grown so miserably old and are so attached to this world, making absolutely no account of the world to come, that if

by chance they see one of their children running to church, eager to stay there and converse with chaste men, they say in reproach that harm has been done to him and rage against those who have led him to this perfection, calling them corrupters of children, harmful men, and other such names. And if the child himself courageously disposes himself to the monastic life and chooses for himself to lead the ascetic life, then they commit acts that cannot even be reported and are truly unbearable: they tear their hair, scratch their cheeks, rend their tunics, sit in sackcloth and ashes, clothe themselves in black garments, weep and lament for the child as for a dead man, having their servants and maids accompany them in mourning; moreover, some even place before them a bed or some object belonging to the child, mourn him almost as if he had died abroad, and even summon women who compose laments and are drunk with grief. Is this, tell me, the work of Christians? Of those who await the resurrection? Is this the work of those who have been commanded not to mourn the dead excessively, "as others who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13)? And why mention these things while omitting what is more important and serious? For generally keeping their children at home, if one of them shows even the slightest inclination toward the ascetic life, they find in their minds thousands of pretexts to spend money, choosing teachers and instructors of all kinds of sciences and professions. Though at great expense they buy them offices and direct them toward the profession of advocates, they do not offer a single obol to those in need for this purpose. But if they see one of their children, after such preparation, in too modest a situation, or even just slightly lacking in wickedness, they call him useless, treat him as lazy, and name him good-for-nothing; and when, with such epithets, they have reproached his honest conduct, they try to drag him into evil, like those who divert streams from one place to another. On the other hand, the one who in his behavior is more unscrupulous, inclined to shady gains, brazen-faced, impure in speech as in thought, ready for contention—they temper him like a sword and sharpen him, inflame him with avarice, find occasions to incite him to amass profits under the spur of insatiability, often boasting in their conversations of their great wealth…(missing conclusion).

They call them poor, they put on gloomy faces, and they say: “Your inheritance will be small, my son, especially if it is divided into three or four parts among all the children you have.” And those who at first prayed to be worthy of having good sons now feel something strange and hostile; they lament the number of their children, and as soon as they see a boy so disposed, they rejoice, indulge in pleasures, and say: “Let this one become a man!” Yet it would be better and far more fitting to say to them: “You are mistaken, for you are not making this one a man, but something wretched, evil, and savage.” Yes, all of you—when one of your children loses an eye, or a hand, or even a little finger is paralyzed, you lament and consider it a cruel dishonor and a shame; but when his soul is afflicted with many incurable wounds, weighed down by gluttony, lust, pride, worldly pleasures, and shameful passions, you do not even realize that your attitude clearly shows you have given birth only to flesh, and not to rational souls. On this matter, you are attentive only to dismissing any profitable thought—the very thing that could lead you astray. For in this way, you wage war against yourselves and harm the salvation of your children. Most of the questions concerning them you reduce to the money you possess, which becomes in advance the means to satisfy their passions. By doing this, both of you together commit faults that are almost incurable and beyond forgiveness. What you have laid bare in your souls, through the movements of justice—though today you may be about to set out on the road from which there is no return, to drink from it, and to be carried away…

There is also this: in the end, you allow your children to live on the verge of sin. For he who provides abundance and opportunity to sinners must, in all justice, share even in their fruits. Concerning this, Ecclesiastes said, calling it a sickness: “There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun: riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt” (Ecclesiastes 5:13). And when we hear the sacred book say: “He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord” (Proverbs 19:17), and when we see Christ in the street, lacking necessary clothing, it is He whom we strip further; and what we are clothed with, we hide. If we reflect together, tell me—if you see a king pursued by enemies and adversaries, who finally escapes their hands and is saved unexpectedly, standing without clothing and without anyone to honor him, would you not, in your generosity, give him costly and precious garments,

abundant consolation and delights? And would you not expect that if he regains his kingdom and resumes royal struggles, honoring the crown, he will immediately summon you and your children to the royal court, remember your kindness, and raise you to the highest honors? Now Christ, the King of endless heaven, the God who does not deceive with His words or false promises—if you feed Him or clothe Him with a little food or necessary clothing (for in this above all lies the greatness of His love for mankind)—will He not remember you and your children? Will He not reward you with honors and gifts worthy of God, now and in the kingdom of heaven? Would this not be? Would this not be? One of those wise in divine things exclaims: “Consider the generations of old and see: did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded?” (Sirach 2:10). Are we not, then, the fathers of our children, so that before God and for our salvation...

Therefore, it would have been better for you to depart. For it is what is hardest to bear that He rewards most magnificently. Because of this, the door and the way of life are blocked and encumbered—for I pass over the fact that we owe a new debt to our martyr. Just as the divine Babylas brought down fire from heaven upon the head of Apollo (if you remember what I said), so too he extinguishes the fire of our city when he prays to Christ, remembering us. May he restrain the violence of the flame, he who by his prayers will also save us from the unquenchable and eternal fire. To him be glory, now and always, and unto the ages of ages! Amen!

## HOMILY 13 ON THE MUNIFICENCE OF THE PIOUS EMPEROR (ANASTASIUS), WHO REMITTED SOME OUTSTANDING PUBLIC TAXES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TREASURY. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Vast and difficult to fathom is the depth of the Economy (Divine Plan) which the Word of God and Savior Jesus Christ manifested to our race by His coming in the flesh. Yet this seems so evident to us that we glorify Him only as Benefactor, acknowledge Him as Creator, adore Him afterward as the One who, after our creation, formed us anew for perfection. We turn the eyes of our spirit downward and glorify in silence Him who is beyond all thought and word. Who would not marvel, indeed, to see the King of the heavenly armies paying taxes to the kings of the earth and submitting Himself to taxation like others, as if subject to tribute and levy? And what is even more remarkable, He did this while still a small child in the womb of the Virgin, the Mother of God. This, in truth, appears wholly as an act of humility, conforming to the rules of His self-emptying and voluntary poverty. For to be subject to taxation seems entirely human, since it is visible, yet it is wholly fitting for God. For He who is in the form of God, and who, out of love, took the form of a slave—becoming man without change (for the words "He is" reveal the immutability of the divine essence and the stability of His eternal being)—when He willed to abolish for us the slavery of sin, was symbolically taxed as one subject to authority. He severed the bonds of that slavery and tore up the sentence against our race. Who, then, could accomplish this restoration? He who is free by nature. And who is free by nature? The Only-Begotten Son and Word of God…(missing)

...Or again, sometimes when it is a poor stranger, in the depths of winter, the creditor drives him from his house, expels him, and immediately demands payment. But at once, this wretched man, stiffened by the cold, seeing that the poor and worthless garments he owned—his miserable rags worth only a few obols—are thrown into the public square, that his debt is demanded and he has nothing to pay, and that he is pressed on all sides, sheds hot tears over his sufferings, with no one to relieve his poverty.

How then, O man, will you confidently say to God, "Forgive me," when you yourself have forgiven nothing, though you owe many debts and countless sins, and have shown toward your neighbor and brother the hardness of one with a heart of stone? But why do I speak of a debt? Often it is a word of insult, mockery, or some other despicable sentiment that we refuse to forgive our neighbor. Then, as if our honor had been slighted and we had suffered every evil, we sharpen the sting of anger like scorpions and, like camels, harbor that wrath in our minds. We do not rest until we repay evil for that slight, and when harm is done to us only in words (as we claim), we return harm in deeds. How then can we confidently say, "Forgive us"? For—I will repeat the same thing many times—where is the justice in us obtaining what we ourselves have not granted to our neighbor? This, indeed, a wise man also said with astonishment: "Though he himself is flesh, he harbors anger and asks the Lord for healing." But let us remember the day of judgment. Since we stand in need of mercy, let us secure mercy for ourselves in advance. Let us forgive generously, so that we may obtain a more generous remission. Through the gift of the pious emperor, let us turn to charity. Let us pray for him and for the empress, who makes peace and loves Christ, saying: "Save, O Lord, Your king, and save her also. Hear us on the day we call upon You, for Yours is the praise, the glory, and the power, now and always, and unto the ages of ages. Amen."

## HOMILY 14 PRONOUNCED IN MEMORY OF THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY. TABLE OF CONTENTS

It is beautiful and fitting that we offer words of praise to all the saints. Let us honor them with encomiums and solemnities, as those who have truly served their Master and faithfully contributed to the Economy of our salvation. Let us first praise the prophets, who by their own perfection were deemed sufficient to proclaim beforehand the great mystery of piety. Then, the apostles, who announced this mystery; and finally, the martyrs, who by their own blood confirmed the prophecies of the former and the preaching of the latter. For this confirmation, they also received the name "martyrs," as it is customary to call those who, by their words or blood, attest to facts that cannot otherwise be demonstrated or believed. The word of Christ's martyrs is the outpouring of their blood, which followed the first and divine outpouring of blood shed for us by the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He bore witness to Himself before others, though He had no need of testimony—He who rendered the good confession before Pontius Pilate, as the Apostle Paul says, and rightly so. For what more faithful witness could He require, who is Himself the Truth? Yet, accepting the devotion of His servants, He associated them with His own title and called them martyrs. As for the Mother of God, the truly holy and ever-virgin Mary, how can we not honor her as prophetess, apostle, and martyr? As prophetess, according to Isaiah's prophecy about her: "I approached the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. And the Lord said to me: Call his name 'Spoil quickly, plunder speedily,' for before the child knows how to say 'father' or 'mother,' he will take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria before the king of Assyria." Who is this prophetess mentioned in the divine Scriptures, who bore a son named "Spoil quickly, plunder speedily"—a son who, as soon as He was born and before knowing how to say "father" or "mother," plundered enemies and took their spoils? Who else but the Mother of God, the Virgin who bore Emmanuel? From the very beginning of His fleshly birth, He overthrew the Slanderer, seizing the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria. These words symbolically represent idolatry through a kind of antonomasia: Damascus means "blood-drinking," and Samaria is the city that fashioned the golden calves and abolished among its people the true worship and adoration of the one God. It is evident to all that idolatry is recognized by these two traits—that we name and worship as gods things made by human hands, and

that we offer sacrifices through blood and burnt offerings. Thus, Emmanuel, as soon as He was born in the flesh, took the spoils of these evils. On the one hand, He drew the Magi to adore Him in swaddling clothes in His infancy; on the other, He went into Egypt because of Herod's slaughter of the infants and there shook the idols made by hands, as Isaiah also prophesied. He did these things and took these spoils "before the king of Assyrians"—for the prophecies often call the Slanderer "the king of Assyrians," and one may find this name for him scattered throughout the prophets. Such is the child whom the prophetess Mary bore for us: from His earliest infancy and by His birth itself, He demolished the stronghold of the Slanderer's tyranny. "Do not wonder," says Isaiah, for this child was the Mighty God, the Angel of the Great Counsel—He who reveals and manifests in Himself, as the living Word, the Father who is beyond all understanding. He is the Wonderful Counselor, who with the Father created the spiritual and visible world and heard the words, sharing in His counsel and honor: "Let us make man in Our image and likeness." He is the Mighty God, the strength of the invisible Father—for Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God—and He is rightly addressed: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness." He is the Prince of Peace, who united earthly things with heavenly and pacified all things by the blood of His cross, as Paul says. He is the Father of the Age to Come, the beginning and sower of future life and eternal, endless hopes—namely, the Kingdom of Heaven which He preached. Therefore, the Virgin and Mother, having borne such a child—who is both Lord of the prophets and her own Lord—prophesied after Elizabeth's greeting, saying: "Behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name. His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him." Moreover, she is an apostle—as she may rightly be called—and one may even say she surpasses all apostles. For from the beginning, she was numbered among the apostles themselves, as the Book of Acts recounts: "They were gathered together, persevering in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus." And if the apostles were made such by the word they heard from our Lord—"Go, teach all nations"—what nation has this Virgin not taught and brought to the knowledge of God? She did this while remaining silent, through her singular, unparalleled childbearing—which resounded through the world—and through her incomparable conception, making her the mother and root of the Gospel's preaching. She is also a martyr in many ways—let us not fear to say so.

She endured the rash judgment of Joseph, who thought her conception was due to adultery before learning through the angel's revelation the mystery of her childbearing. She fled to Egypt before Herod's fury, then returned from Egypt and went to Nazareth. She lived daily among the murderous Jews, leading a life close to death. How, then, is it not right that we honor her whom the spirits of the just now honor? The patriarchs honor her as the one who fulfilled the long-awaited hope and brought the blessing of Abraham's seed—Christ—which extended to all peoples and lands. The prophets honor her as the one who illuminated their prophecies and bore the Sun of Justice, who revealed hidden and unknown things. The apostles honor her as the one they recognized as the beginning of their preaching. The martyrs honor her as the one who first brought them the example of struggles and crowns. The doctors of the Church and shepherds of Christ's rational sheep honor her as the one who silences heresy and, like a pure and drinkable spring, pours forth for us the streams of orthodoxy—above all, dispelling the darkness of the Manichaeans. For when the Word of God became incarnate from her without change, He showed that the Creator and Author of our nature is one. If, according to the blasphemous myths of the heretics, the good God is the author of the soul while the evil principle and uncreated darkness are the authors of the body, how could the Son of the Father, the Good God, come—as it is written—to partake of blood and flesh in our nature? Unable to endure this rebuke, they flee to the fictions of the impious Eutyches, which they received as a paternal inheritance. They say He appeared only in semblance, that Emmanuel did not truly become man—contradicting the divine Scriptures and the holy Gospel, wherein the holy Virgin, by becoming the instrument of the divine Incarnation, destroys all the fabrications of their babble. The Word did not take her into His service to give us a shadow or phantom, but true flesh consubstantial with us, which He hastened to heal and renew. Had He wished to use an illusion, why would He have needed Mary? Why the conception, the nine months in the womb, the birth, the swaddling clothes, the breasts, the milk, the infancy, the growth? The Uncreated One truly took all these things upon Himself for us, willingly submitting to the laws of human nature that He Himself had established. He passed through all our states except sin, so that, by imparting to us His freedom and blessing, He might destroy the sin, slavery, and curse upon our race. Moses, the adversary of the impious Manichaeans, also showed this clearly. He saw a bush burning without being consumed—a prefiguration of the indivisible union of God the Word with human

nature, wrought by love and accomplished without change. The bush, a thorny plant, signifies that He partook of our thorny, sin-subjected nature (save for sin itself), to transmit to us the power to conquer sin. He is called the Second Adam and became the firstfruits of the new creation as He was of the first.

The Virgin herself rejects and drives out, as impure, the madness of Apollinaris, who claims that our Savior Christ is without a human mind. For though the Virgin is a rational, living being capable of intelligence and knowledge—for this is what man is—she bore God incarnate without change as a rational and intelligent child, to grant us, the rational, complete salvation. Truly, God the Word would deserve accusation if He had left His own image—our rational nature—unhealed, alienating it from divine union by taking irrational flesh and deeming that flesh alone worthy of salvation. Nor does the Virgin, Mother of God, tolerate the folly of Nestorius. How is she not the Mother of God, she who bore as her child the Mighty God, the Angel of the Great Counsel, the Wonderful Counselor, the Prince of Peace, the Father of the Age to Come? "But," he says, "it is not proper for a woman to bear God." If you mean without a body, I agree. But if with a body, do not hesitate at this marvel. A woman cannot bear a soul alone, apart from a body; but when united in marriage and becoming one with the body through simultaneous generation, she bears both together. Thus, she is rightly called mother not of flesh alone, but of the rational man. Think the same of Emmanuel's birth in the flesh, for the sacred Scripture teaches us: "Since the children share in blood and flesh, He likewise partook of the same." It was not the beginning of His divinity that God the Word received from Mary—for He is without beginning, the Author of all ages and time. But when He chose to become incarnate and be made man—that is, to unite hypostatically with flesh consubstantial with us, animated by a rational soul and mind—the Virgin brought forth from her own nature all that belongs to womanhood. The Holy Spirit, since there was no union with a husband, acted as Author and perfected the birth itself. Thus, the Word Himself, when conceived and born in the flesh, made Mary the Mother of God, as she bore the Word incarnate. She is named by what is most excellent, for the mystery itself consisted in the triumph of the better part, the exaltation of our race, and its perfection. Therefore, He who was born is also called Emmanuel—one without division or confusion, of two natures: divinity and humanity. How could He, who possesses all things uniquely and indivisibly—the incorporeal birth from the Father and the same

divinity (for only He is born of the One, God of God), and the birth from the Virgin (for only He is born of an unmarried woman, and of her alone)—how could He, without violating His Mother's virginity in His fleshly birth, be divided and broken by a duality of natures after the ineffable union, as the Council of Chalcedon, clinging to Nestorius' follies, taught? No—He is wholly one. Therefore, He called us, who were separated from God, to union and peace, becoming the Mediator between God and men. Thus, we honor the holy Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary with surpassing honors, as she who is most capable of raising prayers for us above all other saints—and as she whom we boast to have obtained as the adornment of our race: the rational earth from which the Second Adam, unformed and uncreated, fashioned Himself in the flesh, the virginal plant from which Christ, the heavenly ladder, was formed in the flesh by the Spirit, that we, setting our feet on His steps, might ascend to heaven, and the spiritual Mount Sinai, not shrouded in darkness but shining with the Sun of Justice, giving not only the Law of the Ten Commandments but the Lawgiver Himself, who appeared on earth and lived among men—instructing not one people, not Israel alone, but all nations and races through the Gospel, captivating them by persuasion. What honor, then, shall we render to the Mother of God—or rather, to God who was incarnate from her for our salvation? For herein He finds honor, sacrifice, and offering. How beautiful it is that by His coming in the flesh, the earth became heaven, so that even angels dwell upon it, as He Himself said in the Gospel: "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending." But we, who ought to live in a manner worthy of heaven, do not even do what befits the earth—only what suits Sheol and the pit of perdition. Though we ought to pursue virginity and guard it for the sake of God born of a Virgin, we do not even restrain in chaste marriage the desires that Christ's cross has blunted and made easy to conquer—since it blunted sin, the sting of death. Instead, we defile God's temple with fornication and become like neighing stallions, as a prophet says. But I beg and implore you: do not make this fleeting pleasure—which vanishes as soon as it is fulfilled, leaving sorrow—into an unquenchable flame and endless torment. Rather, let each of us possess his vessel in holiness and honor, as Paul, wise in all things, says—that we may obtain eternal goods by the grace and love of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be praise with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 15 ON THE FAST OF THE FORTY (DAYS) DELIVERED ON THE PRECEDING FRIDAY IN THE CHURCH OF CASSIAN. TABLE OF CONTENTS

It is a law, even in bodily competitions, that before the true day of combat, as in preliminary engagements, athletes contend against one another. So too, I call this day and the beginning of the forty-day fast a preliminary combat. Therefore, I deem it most fitting to speak to you today on this subject, especially in this church, whose spiritual foundation—indeed, even its stone foundation—was laid by the apostles themselves. They, after Christ, are the legislators and guardians of this fast, having established it for us not as austere men worthy of condemnation—as if they wished to make us thin by extending the cycle of fasting days—but as men who seek to purify our souls and cleanse the image of God within us, which has been obscured by dishonorable passions. This image can no longer behold or receive the light of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, as the Apostle Peter says. For just as a cloud running before the sun hides the brightness of its rays, and as smoke attacking the eyes, provoking stinging tears, blurs and troubles vision, so too the smoky exhalations of fleshly desires arising from satiety and indulgence become for the soul a cloud and smoke. They prevent it from gazing with spiritual eyes upon the things above—though it is from above—and from knowing the nobility of its origin, so that it may say, as it is written: “The divine Spirit made me, and the breath of the Almighty teaches me”. Instead, like leaden chains, these desires weigh it down, drag it earthward, and bind it to the earth. For “the earthly tent burdens the mind with many cares”, as a wise man has said.

Therefore, as an absolutely necessary remedy, this Physician of our souls has prescribed fasting for us who are sick, saying: “When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face”. First, according to the obvious meaning, He directs us away from vainglory, clearly proclaiming: “Do not be sad like the hypocrites”. Second, He also elevates us, raising us to a most divine thought, commanding us to anoint and brighten through fasting the head of our inner being—the ruler of the soul—and to wash the eyes of the spiritual face through this fast, as it is said in Ecclesiastes: “The wise man has his eyes in his head”.

For he who purifies the intellect—this ruler—through fasting and other works of perfection sharpens the operations of the mind, like eyes, for the contemplation of what is excellent and exalted, and for the consideration of God. Truly, on a bodily head, the wise and the foolish have similar eyes, differing neither in position nor in function. But for the eyes of the spirit, fasting takes the place of oil and water, possessing their virtues: of water, in washing away and sweeping off like river currents earthly cares and the preoccupation with the belly and its attendant evils; of oil, as that which illuminates our steps like a lamp, eagerly seeking the narrow, hidden paths of perfection, anointing us for battle against our enemies, arming us through the deprivation of food against the fighters who need no nourishment—the demons, who neither eat nor drink—rousing us for combat, awakening us, and crying out with Paul: “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

But now, as the discourse progresses, it has taught us the reason for fasting: namely, the battle against demons and evil spirits. And what is this battle against them? It is in the heavenly places. For it is because of the heavenly places that we struggle: on the one hand, when we strive to ascend there through fasting and the toils of perfection; on the other, when the demons and the Slanderer, their chief, fiercely strive to drag us down from there, hindering us as we journey toward these goods through good works and leading our steps astray. For though he was once an angel, he is now Satan and the adversary—for this is what the Hebrew word "Satan" signifies. Created for good by God, the only good Creator who made all things good and very good, he later became sick with pride through an act of his free will. He raised his neck, as it is written, against the Almighty Lord, turned away from the contemplation of the primal and essential light, and shut his spiritual eye, filling himself with darkness until he became capable of all malice. For this, the sacred books call him “the throne of iniquity”, as the one in whom all malice resides. He fell from the first and highest rank, and so did the armies that rebelled with him—those who were also created from among the ministering spirits, who were likewise good but became wicked with him. It is for this reason, and because of the sting of envy, that they fell ill. They cannot bear the thought that we might obtain the blessings of which they were deprived due to their wickedness. But God, our Creator, this skilled and wise Captain of the contest, who

turns all things to good, has used the malice of these beings for our instruction. He restrains the arrogance and swelling pride of those who once belonged to a higher and superior order, while we, who are of the earth, are in a happier state than they. Moreover, He exhibits us in a struggle against formidable enemies, against radiant athletes, and calls us to more magnificent and illustrious crowns.

But truly, though it should not have been necessary, after we fell in the first transgression through Adam's disobedience, the Word of God, remaining what He was and becoming man for us without change, took upon Himself our struggle and undertook the battle against our enemy. Just as He was baptized for us—not because He needed purification, but to purify the waters in advance, becoming Himself a bath for the Jordan, delivering it from the dominion of demons, and breaking, as it is written, "the heads of the dragons in the waters"—so too He endured the temptation of the Slanderer for us and submitted to the contest. He calmed in advance the battle waged against Him for us who were weary and weakened, making the enemy and adversary—so difficult to conquer—easier to subdue. Consider, then, the immensity of His love for mankind and how His divine plan for our race serves as a model for us to contemplate, a prefiguration of perfect conduct, and a symbol of piety. What does the sacred book of the Gospels say? "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil". What do you say? Was He led by the Spirit against His will to endure the devil's temptation? While we govern our lives by free will, voluntarily coming to the labors of perfection and enduring temptation concerning them, was He dragged into this unwillingly? How foolish is it even to entertain such a thought! But the words "He was led by the Spirit" mean this: He came to a sublime and spiritual way of life, thereby providing an occasion for the Tempter. This, too, aligns with the methods of His voluntary self-emptying. For in becoming man without change, He accomplished everything human on our behalf, showing that we too, after baptism, enriched with the gift of adoption, must advance to a higher life and be led by the Spirit—not by the will of the flesh—as Paul also wrote to the Romans: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God". For how could He, who is consubstantial with the Holy Spirit as God and of one essence with the Father, need a spiritual and higher life? But, as I have said, He symbolically prefigured in Himself, as a teaching and part of His divine plan, what is beneficial and fitting for us.

And how could temptation be necessary for Him who "bore the sin of the world" and to whom John said, "I need to be baptized by You, and You come to me"—unless He had taken my temptation upon Himself to bend the inflexible tempter for my sake? For this reason, He also fasted, and after forty days, He voluntarily experienced hunger, without exceeding the measure of the fasts of Moses and Elijah, which He Himself had appointed for them. This was to provide the enemy with an occasion for battle. For had He surpassed the forty days, the Slanderer would have feared to fight Him, having discerned His divinity and unable to regard Him as a mere man and example. Therefore, humbling and lowering Himself, Jesus also repelled the devil with words from the Spirit-inspired Book when he incited Him to boastfulness and pride, saying at one time, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread", and at another, "Throw Yourself down from here". He performed no action and spoke no word in keeping with the natural glory and power befitting God that He possessed. For it was our instruction and training that were aimed at by these proposals, so that we might be taught and learn how to fight against the enemy and the adversary before us. Consequently, as soon as this was finished and the Slanderer had departed, Jesus immediately displayed His superiority and inaccessibility. For the angels also came and ministered to Him as Lord and God by nature.

From this teaching arose for us this annual law, as well as the cycle of the forty-day fast, which contains within it a mystical and mysterious number. But apply your minds with me, that we may learn why we fast for only forty days and not fifty or sixty. We know from the writings of Moses that he says: "God made this visible world in six days, and He rested on the seventh day", because the seventh is the total time of this life. For the week, revolving and turning like a circle, completes this age, which lasts but a time, until, when it is finished, the day of the Lord will come—that great and resplendent day, which is truly counted as the eighth if reckoned with this life, and as the first and only with respect to the age to come. For then, neither will night interrupt it, nor will another day succeed or replace it, surpassing it and taking its place. Rather, it is one and unending: toward it we all hasten, for it is both eighth and first, the day awaited by the spirits of the just from the beginning until now. When we pray to obtain this day, we also purify ourselves, and our purification consists in this: not to sin through any of these five senses—

hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste. For these are the gateways of sin, through which every desire leading to death is fulfilled, as the prophet Jeremiah also lamented to sinners: “Death has come up through our windows”.

Having given these explanations, let us return to our original topic and see why we fast for only these forty days. Why? To prepare ourselves for that eighth and first day—that great and resplendent day, the day of the Lord. For those who purify these five senses eightfold—through which sin finds entry, namely hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell—fast for forty days to attain the blessed day, the eighth and first. For the number five, multiplied by eight, completes the number forty. These are the days Moses the lawgiver fasted; these are the days Elijah the prophet fasted; these are the days Jesus, the Lord of the Law and the prophets, the God of the Gospels, the Teacher and Herald of the life to come, also fasted. Therefore, Moses, after living an ascetic life outside Egypt for forty years, then received the leadership of Israel. Likewise, the people, after remaining in the wilderness for forty years and being trained, then entered the promised land. These things happened to them as figures, as Paul says, but they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Now, having learned the causes, reasons, and purpose of fasting, let us gladly explain its practice. But do not grieve or weep over the deprivation of fleshly pleasures. Do not fill the hours with yawns and laziness. Do not raise your hands above your heads to relax, do not lean against walls, do not gape at the sun, and do not await the day’s end like a traveler who has set out at the wrong time and, in disgust, counts the weeks—calling one the first, another the middle, and another the last. Do not arbitrarily dedicate some weeks to fasting as holy, while assigning ordinary food to the middle weeks, treating them as a pause or rest between two battles. Who made this a law for you, O man? Truly, it is your belly. But you, too, say to it: "It is forty days that you have been commanded to fast, O wretched insatiable one! And yet you lay down laws contrary to the One who gave the command." Beware lest He strike you with an illness: then you would hunger by force and fast those days without reward and against your will. Fast, therefore, all the days willingly, giving thanks to this Lawgiver and Physician, and rejoice in the flesh at the healing purpose of the fast. And if you wish not to notice the length of the day, nourish your soul with divine thoughts. Read the Scriptures and the

writings of the Church's teachers and mystagogues who have interpreted them. But if you have a manual trade by which you earn your livelihood, take up the tools of your trade and practice what is customary for it. Let your mouth sing psalms instead of Satan's songs and dance tunes, and let what is sung have a meaning that spreads blessing and grace on your labors. If someone sits near you unoccupied—even your son, still learning from his teacher of reading and writing or other disciplines—after you have sung the psalms you know, give him a copy of the divine Book and ask him to read it. Let your wife also be near you, if possible, with her wool basket at hand, listening attentively. And if you have a hired worker, a servant, or a maidservant, do likewise. For Moses also gave this instruction to those still guided by the training of the Law, who still need milk and are but infants in divine matters.

Make your house a church, you who have been deemed worthy of these most perfect and evangelical instructions. But perhaps you will say: "I do not know how to sing, and I cannot abandon my work. Shall I then starve? Shall I take up the Psalter, recite and learn psalms?" Listen, then, to the word that cries to you: "How long will you slumber, O sluggard?"—and often through a long winter night! Rouse yourself a little, go to church, and listen to the psalmody. You will be inwardly touched by divine love, choosing to keep vigil rather than sleep, and you will say that those who sleep are as in death. Go by night to sing to the Lord, and by day fill your mouth with the same honeyed sweetness, meditating on the law of the Lord day and night, as it is written. But there are some who have no trade and wander aimlessly and idly. They "are busybodies", as Paul says, and they go to the spectacles of horse races. Why then, someone might say, do you command us to despise this new favor of our pious emperor, this most liberal gift? I will answer you most fittingly: Tell me, did he give this gift for this purpose—that you despise the Church and mock the holy days of fasting? Not at all! Rather, it was to put an end to these great evils. For truly, you are inclined to wickedness, which he cannot prevent, while urging you toward perfection. In this, he imitates parents who love their children, giving them nuts and dice to play with, commanding them to amuse themselves lest, if they go beyond the door, they fall into wells or pools, or, fleeing instruction and the teaching of letters, they meet thieves or escaped prisoners who rob passersby. Therefore, if your disposition is not childish and foolish, let the horse race pass by. For you who do not watch it, let it be a superfluous and useless

spectacle. And when the pious emperor sees that our entire city—or the greater part of it—has such perfect dispositions and does not go to see the horse race, he will bestow gifts not as to infants but as to men—gifts far more precious than all else. For he himself prays to see all gathered in the church, where he has been assiduous all his life, attending vigils, singing, and praying. Indeed, he lives ascetically even with the scepter and crown, which are also his safeguard. But what has been said is not enough, in my opinion, to preserve the one who fasts. There are many other things I cannot address for lack of time. I will say only this in place of all else: Let the one who fasts place in the hand of the poor the price of the food he would have eaten had he taken a midday meal, and let him feed the hungry Christ through his fast. For it is beautiful, O most beloved, and most profitable, that Christ should perceive through this that you have fasted and that, through the piety of sharing, you have kindled the lamp of abstinence. For no perfection pleases Him, even if real, when piety is lacking. Let us, then, acquire this piety abundantly, along with the rest, and we will obtain the kingdom of heaven. May it be granted to us all to attain it by the grace and love of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be praise with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever!

## HOMILY 16 ON THE REASON WHY WE READ THE BOOK OF GENESIS DURING THE FORTY DAYS OF FASTING, ON DECENCY IN OUR SONGS, AND ON CHASTE AND HONEST CONDUCT DELIVERED IN THE GREAT CHURCH. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Is there anyone among you assembled here who loves to learn and strives to hear divine words, who has inquired privately or asked his neighbor, seeking together why, during these venerable and holy days of fasting, we read about the creation of the world, written for us by Moses? Or would you prefer that I now speak to you on this subject? Do you truly wish it? Do you pretend not to know and choose to say and endure all things, simply to launch me into the race of words and bring me to the arena of teaching? Thus, you listen with pleasure to my humble words. Therefore, I too present myself before the wealth of your affection, though I am poor, and I willingly forget the proverb that says: “Do not present yourself, if you are poor, before the rich” (Prov. 23:4 LXX). And so I come to speak, though I am entirely unprepared for this instruction. But grant me this favor: listen to me in silence and conduct yourselves properly, without jostling one another or trying to push those standing nearby, as if scrambling for spoils. Otherwise, you harm yourselves by losing the ability to hear due to the noise you make, and we, for our part, are disconcerted and troubled, forced to repeat the same things multiple times and return to the same subjects. For we must heed the divine book, which says: “The words of the wise are heard in quietness” (Eccl. 9:17).

Now, let us immediately address what we proposed to examine: we celebrate the venerable and holy days of fasting in honor of the saving Passion, in which we acknowledge that God suffered in the flesh, procured for us impassibility, renewed our "vessel" — aged and worn by sin — through His resurrection, and called us to a new life, where we await, according to His promise, new heavens and a new earth (Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13), as prophesied by Isaiah and the apostle Peter. For it is not we alone who await a change of being and improvement through the resurrection, but all visible creation around us will also undergo a transformation corresponding to our glory and share in the resulting splendor. Indeed, just as now, after being subjected to corruption due to sin, the elements of our world are likewise subjected to decay and change (Rom. 8:20-21) — for we see the sun darkened and the moon eclipsed (Job 31:26), as Job, the greatest of ascetics, said

— so too, when immortality and incorruptibility blossom upon our bodies in the flowering meadow of the resurrection, this visible world around us will also become radiant with fitting beauty. For the good Creator, who can transform things into greater beauty, demonstrates that He brought sensible creation into existence for our service and benefit, and in the end, He will arrange it anew for us in a glorious and ageless state. This is what the prophet Isaiah also foretold, as far as it was possible to speak of the ineffable glory: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has the heart of man conceived” (Isa. 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9) the nature of this glory. “And the light of the moon will be like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold on that day when the Lord heals the wound of His people and the pain of their blow” (Isa. 30:26).

Now, the wound inflicted upon us by sin is death. And what could heal this wound but the resurrection, through which the sun, the moon, and all other elements will shine and be renewed forever? This is entirely just. For just as a servant shares in his master’s evil deeds if the master behaves wickedly, but if the master turns to good, the servant also becomes well-disposed, so too creation, which was made to serve us and once shared in corruption, will, when we return to incorruptibility, partake again with us in the resulting honor. Indeed, the divine Paul also affirmed this when writing to the Romans: “The creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the children of God. For creation was subjected to futility — not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it — in hope that creation itself will be liberated from the bondage of decay into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we know that all creation groans together and suffers together until now” (Rom. 8:19-22). The preacher of truth personifies creation itself to clearly show the magnitude of this reality, saying that it “awaits” — that is, intensely desires — the day of resurrection, which is the revelation of the children of God (Rom. 8:19) and the manifestation of the righteous. For "awaiting" implies a prolonged expectation of what is hoped for, so that the one who waits, as it were, leans forward and directs his gaze as if already seeing what is anticipated. The Apostle, continuing to personify creation, says that “creation was subjected to futility — not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it — in hope that creation itself will be liberated from the bondage of decay into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (Rom. 8:20-21). Indeed, after being deceived by sin, we fell into a vain and corrupt life. Yet even in this state, when we slid into every shameful desire and even the

abyss of perdition, creation was subjected to us, not willingly — that is, not because we were worthy (for one willingly serves those who are worthy, but serving the unworthy is not done gladly) — but because of Him who subjected it (Rom. 8:20) through the abundance of His kindness and the riches of His goodness, who "sends rain on the just and the unjust and makes the sun shine on the evil and the good" (Matt. 5:45). Moreover, joining justice with goodness and kindness, He did not deprive us of the service of His creatures, though we were unworthy, having given ourselves over to vanity and corruption. But He hoped that creation too might obtain freedom and share in the glory promised to the children of God, even if now it groans with us and suffers together (Lev. 17:24-25), longing for this hope. The words "it groans together and suffers together" (Rom. 8:22), like the phrase "creation was subjected, not willingly" (Rom. 8:20), are characteristic of personification. For the Apostle did not say this to attribute reason to insensible creation but to make the force of his thought manifestly clear through this personification. For it is the habit of divine Scripture to personify inanimate and insensible things and to lend words to the speechless. At times it says: "Why, O sea, did you flee? And you, O Jordan, turn back? Mountains, why did you leap like rams, and hills like lambs?" (Ps. 114:5-6). At other times, through the prophet Micah, it cries out: "Hear, O mountains, the Lord's dispute, and you, enduring foundations of the earth, for the Lord has a dispute with His people, and He will contend with Israel" (Mic. 6:2).

Moses, too, when forbidding all shameful and unlawful unions outside the Law to those receiving it from him, spoke as if to frighten them, saying that the Promised Land had become an enemy to the nations who previously inhabited it, as if groaning because of their dishonorable deeds and great shame. He wrote: "Do not defile yourselves with any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have defiled themselves. The land became defiled, and I punished its iniquity upon it, and the land vomited out its inhabitants" (Lev. 18:24-25). Therefore, since we purify ourselves beforehand through fasting before the resurrection — of which Emmanuel has given us the pledge and guarantee by rising after three days in the tomb…(missing)

For a habit is hard to change, and God was not inclined to suddenly heal the children of Israel, who were imperfect and inclined toward idolatry due to their

prolonged stay in Egypt. On a similar matter — concerning blood — God permitted them to offer sacrifices because He knew they would not fully obey. Thus, He commanded sacrifices to Himself alone, thereby restraining the excesses of polytheism until, reaching a perfect understanding, they would say with David: “If You had desired sacrifice, I would have given it, but You take no pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit” (Ps. 51:18-19). In the same way, He commanded them to sing with cymbals, harps, and other musical instruments (cf. Ps. 150), because they had grown up with songs, banquets, demonic frenzies, feasts, solemnities, and dances. But in the end, He openly declared through the prophet: “I will remove the sound of your songs from you, and the music of your harps will no longer be heard” (Ezek. 26:13). And again: “The song of the divine bird is sorrowful and draws forth tears. And after the tears of holy desire, when the soul washes away the stains of sins with weeping...”

For we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words. And He who searches hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26). What does this mean? Know, O inquiring listener, that “many gifts were given by God to the believers of that time and to those baptized by the apostles, as well as various graces. The divine Apostle recalls this here for each of them when the Spirit compels him, saying: To one was given a word of wisdom, and he instructed many; to another, a word of prophecy, and he foretold the future; to another, gifts of healing, and he healed many; to another, miracles, and he raised the dead; to another, tongues, and he spoke in various languages” (1 Cor. 12:8-10). Beyond these, there is also the gift of prayer, which is called the Spirit, and the one who received it prayed for all the people. Because we are ignorant of many things that are not beneficial to us, and because we ask for what is neither fitting nor useful, the gift of prayer came to the one who believed in it and in what is proper and beneficial for the whole Church. This person would rise, speak, and exhort others. The Apostle calls "the Spirit who intercedes for us" the one who prays and the soul that receives this gift and cries out to God with groaning. The one who merits this gift stands with suffering in his heart, with groans uttered in his spirit before God, asking what is fitting for all. The sign of this is the deacon offering prayers for the people. Therefore, we must understand that the Apostle calls "the Spirit who intercedes for us" the spiritual heart, not the Paraclete. We

explain this by his words: “He who searches hearts knows the mind of the Spirit” — that is, of the spiritual man — “because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:27). This is not because God is ignorant and needs to be informed, but so that we may learn to pray rightly and ask God for what is good. For one can sing without sound when the mind produces a melody inwardly. We do not sing for men but for God, who can incline the heart and knows the secrets of the soul. Indicating this, Paul said: “The Spirit intercedes for us with groans too deep for words. And He who searches hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:26-27). This does not mean the Spirit groans, but that spiritual men, who possess the gifts of the Spirit, did this when they offered prayers and supplications with repentance and groaning for those who approached them in holiness and faith. Let us also do this, praying to God daily and beseeching Him with hymns and prayers. When he says, “He intercedes for the saints” (Rom. 8:27), he calls "saints" the faithful, for every believer is sanctified by faith in Christ, those whom He foreknew and predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined, He also called; those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified (Rom. 8:29-30).

Who can bring a charge against God? Even if one is wholly perverse, for if God predestined or appointed some to be called in hope and not others, those He called and appointed He justifies by mercy in baptism, and those He justifies He glorifies through miracles. It is not by their will that He draws them to the call, even if mercy and glory come from God. How then is there no charge against God? Especially since He prepares forever those whom His decree, not their freedom, has called, while He eternally torments those whom He does not decree to be called. Or perhaps He has utterly rejected them, excluding them from the call and faith, though not from honorable favors. Where else should we place the verse: “He called those He predestined” (Rom. 8:30), when everyone is called, since “their voice has gone out to all the earth” (Ps. 19:4; Rom. 10:18)? Even if not all adhere, are justified, or are praised, you see that those who are to be called by their own will and freedom — because He foreknew them before they were called — the Apostle testifies that He predestined them. He called them alone, and though He called them, it was according to the perfection of their being, not for a specific

purpose. “For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law” (Rom. 9:3-4). But because he desires to be accursed for the Jews, it is especially clear that he asks this for Christ alone, for to them belong the adoption, the glory, the worship, and the promises. The Law also comes from them. He spoke of the Messiah and all the covenants with them, of the Messiah coming from them, and of their ancestors who received the promises. Yet here lay the obstacle: they fell away from all these good things. That is why he says: “I am sorrowful, but even if I am separated and excommunicated from the company of Christ, I will not be separated from His love.” Far be it! For even this I would do out of love for Him, but I would have received from these delights and this glory, because my Lord is not blasphemed. For I hear some say: "These things were done for show: He promised to some and gave to others; He was born of some and saved others; He promised to the ancestors of the Jews but abandoned their sons; He took away the goods of those who never knew Him." Therefore, since he does not say these things or anything like them — even if they were spoken unjustly about my Master — behold, I would cast myself out of the kingdom and the ineffable glory and endure all evils. But I thought there would be great consolation in my suffering: that the One I love I would no longer hear blasphemed.

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(Fragment) "He who rejoices unceasingly in Christ is not under this curse, and—what is most significant—the Word of God, who for our sake became flesh and was made man without change, when He willingly went to the saving cross, revealed the reason why He endured the voluntary suffering in the flesh: He allowed Himself to be crowned with thorns, as if crying out through the very events that He came to annul the sentence pronounced against our race, so that He might somehow blunt the sharpness of the thorns—that is, the sting of death—which is why He bore them on His head."

(Fragment) "It is God's custom to lead those who are deeply entangled in error to the truth often through that very error, and to use the things they are attached to in order to reveal higher realities. Indeed, it was through the interpretation of dreams that they recognized the true God. One said of Joseph: "'Could we find another such man, in whom is the Spirit of God?'" (Gen. 41:38), while another exclaimed to Daniel: "'Truly, your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings!'" (Dan. 2:47). For, as I said, He could not send laws or prophets to barbarian peoples, who were stubborn and preoccupied with dream-visions and oracles. But through the very corruption ingrained in them, He kindled the spark of truth."

## HOMILY 18 ON THE FORTY MARTYRS. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Let none among you be surprised that I lead you to this temple of the martyrs, illustrious in their victory, even though our fathers prescribed in the ancient canons that during these forty days of fasting, no assembly should be held to celebrate the triumph of the martyrs. For if we do so, it is not contrary to the laws, since it is permitted on the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, even during the fast, to offer the bloodless sacrifice and to commemorate the holy martyrs. I further declare that a law is judged not by its words but by its spirit. The spirit of this law is as follows: it is not because of the commemoration of the martyrs that we should succumb to passion, resort to taverns and gluttony, and thus interrupt our training in fasting. For those who establish laws not only promulgate what is proper to the law but also foresee in advance...

Nothing is more fitting for fasting than the deeds of the martyrs, and it is no wonder that the martyrs loved fasting, the deprivation of food, and all other trials of endurance, which are the good preparatory exercises for their combat. They would indeed rejoice greatly and be happy if we celebrated all their commemorations with such penitence. But because we might shrink from the labors of perfection and the multitude would not hasten to gather for the solemnity of the martyrs if they were commanded to fast even on that day, for this reason, our fathers allowed us to rejoice and feast in memory of their struggle, condescending to the weakness of our nature and imitating their Master, who endured the cross to grant us freedom. Moreover, this very act of rejoicing and feasting in memory of the martyrs is not outside the laws of the Spirit. For before we received the certain hope—or rather, the pledge—of the resurrection, namely, the resurrection of Christ from the dead after three days, death was death, and the mourning that followed contained absolutely no consolation. But when He who is God and the Word appeared to us through His coming in the flesh, accomplished the Economy concerning us, and loosed the bonds of Sheol, death itself became sleep, and departure from this world became, above all, a feast and not mourning. He who threatened the perfidious Jews through the prophet, saying, "I will turn your feasts into mourning" (Amos 8:10), has turned our mourning into solemnities—especially for those who, like the martyrs, prepared themselves by a good and virtuous life for the resurrection. Therefore, with joy and full gladness, we

celebrate the death of the martyrs each year, dancing and singing with the prophet David and saying with true faith: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Psalm 116:15).

We must know both the object and the terms and the spirit of the canons and laws of the Church. Thus, we will understand whether what we do or say conforms to the legislation, and we will not become blind like the Jews—who rely only on the letter and cling to it, closing their eyes to the beauty of the thoughts within—(like the Jews, I say), who accused our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ of violating the Sabbath because He deigned to heal on that day those who had infirmities and diseases, though they knew neither the terms nor even the spirit of the Law. For the Law, when it commanded concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread and ordered that no work be done during those seven days of feasting as well as on the Sabbath, said in Leviticus: “You shall do no servile work” (Lev. 23:7-8). But in Exodus and Deuteronomy, as if to indicate the meaning of this word, it expressed itself thus: “No work shall be done on these days” (Ex. 12:16), “only what must be done for the soul, that alone may be done by you” (Deut. 16:8), so that it might be well known that "servile work" refers not to the profit and healing of the soul but to the satisfaction of fleshly pleasure and enjoyment, or the practice of a trade, whether in agriculture, commerce, or other similar occupations by which we spend our lives—this, in truth, was forbidden on the Sabbath. But how does healing the paralysis of the body or leprosy not aim at the salvation of the soul, bowed down by the pitiable suffering of the body? Therefore, Jesus, the Lawgiver and Physician, who knew better than His blasphemers the true interpretation and spirit of His Law, which He Himself had borne and established, questioned those senseless Jews for their confusion, saying: “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?” (Luke 6:9).

Let no one accuse us in a Jewish manner because we celebrate the memory of the holy Forty Martyrs during these days of fasting! Though it is indeed not permitted for us to do so for other martyrs, it is lawful for these Forty Martyrs, for they are the children of these forty days of fasting, because each day has borne for us an athlete and a martyr. And indeed, it was during these days that they fought, showing themselves strong in holiness and courage, and rising to the height of such a combat. It is just, therefore, that the fathers rejoice in the struggles of their

children, that we not be unjust toward them, and that we not assign to other days the memory of these. Let all learn that the discipline of fasting knows how to train and exercise children for martyrdom—not just one or two, but a whole group together, an assembly of soldiers, a troop of men armed with the full mystical panoply. These indeed appeared in public when the judge of that time summoned and brought them before him—different in race and body but equal in spiritual age, having attained the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13), according to the word of Paul. Therefore, in the combat, they were equal in zeal and attention, like armed men, and in vigilance, like valiant men who know the rules of combat and how to attack enemies, who have learned, in the manner of the Apostle, to bring every thought into captivity to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), and who have transferred their experience of temporal combats into the spiritual order of battle. When they spoke to the tyrannical judge, two among them acted as spokesmen, placed at the front of the entire troop, while the others arranged themselves behind them, thus placing their trust in what was said. One was named Candios, the other Kurion; both were trained to lead soldiers spiritually. Whenever the judge used flattery, they responded with great firmness, fearing that the flattery itself might weaken the energy of their courage. But when he changed to cruelty, raging with threats and adding severe wounds, even ordering them to be struck in the face with stones, they in turn adapted anew, answering with fitting calm, imitating our incarnate God and Master, who said to the servant who struck Him on the cheek: “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?” (John 18:23).

O model of patience, which can inspire imitation but surpasses all imitation! For even if someone imitates Him exactly in all things, the palm will still belong to Him, because He was God and willingly submitted to His fate. Then, when the judge saw that neither cruelty terrified the martyrs nor flattery could conquer them, but that they saw through his deceit, mocked what his mind had devised, and called him "Agricolaos" (a Latin word aptly translated into Greek, meaning "fierce and flattering"), he was seized with great fury. He enumerated all the various and usual instruments of torture, but seeing that all were similarly mocked and despised, he resorted in his mind to a strange form of torture, thereby weaving for the martyrs a double crown: one because the usual tortures seemed trivial due to their valor and perfection, the other because they endured with constancy and strength an

unaccustomed torment. Naked and in the open air, they were ordered to spend the entire night, bitten by the breath of the north wind, which was very sharp, and covered with frost and fine snow. They remained patiently in the pond, assailed by the waves. On the one hand, they were frozen by the frost; on the other, all (their sufferings) attacked them at once for a certain death, any one of which was enough to bring them to complete destruction and corruption. But on this snow and in this lake, these valiant men imagined themselves to be on a soft bed. While the extremities of their limbs were cracked and burned by the cold, and the warmth of their bodies withdrew inward, they sent outward the flame of their spirit and enveloped their dying bodies with it. The warmth of faith increased as their bodies grew colder, fervently warming the athletes. In their spirit, they envisioned the gnashing of teeth, threatened in eternal torment, and counted as nothing the rigor of temporary cold. If by chance one of them was driven by pain to complain and groan, he heard his neighbor responding ascetically to the pains with psalms and prayers, and he immediately joined him in psalmody, answered ascetically with him, and turned to thanksgiving. Thus, these good soldiers and comrades supported one another and kept their mutual aid unbroken, as in an army arrayed for battle. From heaven, the Agonothete (Christ, the Judge of the contest) watched them, while at the same time the choir of angels rejoiced, prepared to meet them, and readied hymns of victory for the athletes. A light descended from above, illuminating and brightening the stadium of the struggle, like the light our Lord Himself showed the disciples on the mountain when His face shone like the sun and His garments became white as light (Matt. 17:2). For He loves to glorify His true servants as Himself. Truly, crowns also descended for the combatants, equal in number to them, with one exception. One of them, overcome by the torments and fainting, hastened to the nearby bath. As soon as he felt the warmth of the bath, he died, his flesh bursting. Thus, he died a double death: the first, the eternal death of sin, by which the soul dies; the second, the death that delivers from this vain and ephemeral life. His comrades grieved, troubled by sorrow. They did not rejoice at the sight of the heavenly light or the crowns but, as disciples of Christ who love their brethren, wept over the departure and loss of their brother and the dissolution of their group and the sacred number of the Forty.  But the fathers who love their children—I mean the forty days of fasting—capable of some prowess because of the incarnate God who fasted those days, were not indifferent to the sorrow and misery of their children, whom they had conceived by frost and snow.

Immediately, they conceived and bore another, bringing him in to replace the one who had perished.

A man sat outside, keeping watch over the bath, looking toward the icy stadium of the athletes to receive any deserters who might flee the struggle and abandon the ranks for the relief of warm water. As he thought on this and watched intently, he saw a light and beheld crowns descending. Struck within and wholly seized by the appearing beauty, he proclaimed himself a Christian, threw himself among the martyrs, gladly remaining in the pond and frost, and, as it were, asking that the cold become even sharper. With a certain candid ardor, he hastened to be struck by a pious death, remembering Paul's words: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). Thus, he fulfilled his divine desire. After being baptized and perfected in the struggles for piety, he flew away as a martyr with the martyrs and soon beheld Him whom he had so ardently loved. After their death by cold and the departure of their spirits to Christ, the God of spirits and all flesh, the judge ordered them to be burned by fire, enviously denying us the blessing that would come from their holy limbs. Servants carried the bodies of all the saints on a cart but left one who still breathed after all these torments, thinking to bring him back from his good resolve.  But his mother, seeing what had happened, forgot her weakness as a woman, despised the hardness of the persecutors, and cared only for one thing: not to lose her son—for she judged it a loss that he should remain in this life. Lifting him with her hands and placing him on her shoulders, she ran to the cart and threw him over his comrades, saying: "Let the cart carry my sheaf too, which I carried in my womb and brought into this world, and now, having carried him on my shoulders, I send him to the resurrection. I shall see him again there in a little while, and he will not leave me when he dwells in the eternal tabernacles" (cf. Luke 16:9). To sanctify all creation, the persecutor ordered that the venerable ashes from the flames and the half-burned remains of their bones be thrown into the nearby river. After they were cast in, the waters that received them preserved them and, like a ship, guided the precious relics—once scattered—to a certain appointed place, gathering them together. These were the same waters that once divided to let Israel pass as on dry land and restrained their natural course for the passage of the ark (Josh. 4:16-18).

To these venerable ashes of the martyrs, we may apply the words of the prophet Isaiah: “When you pass through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you” (Isa. 43:2). Though divided, they have passed all boundaries. If someone possesses even a tiny particle, like a small seed, he possesses the Forty Martyrs themselves in his home, casting a sorrowful and terrible gaze against the demons. These ashes are a remedy for the weak, instructing and teaching those in need of teaching, a source of peace for enemies and the angry, pacifying and charitable for those who seek their intercession. For they have become all things to all men (1 Cor. 9:22), desiring to profit all. The wise and great Basil, teacher of the whole Church under heaven, also praised these athletes in his panegyric for the martyrs of his region. Truly, he brought forth both excellent teachers and martyrs, receiving their relics as a blessing from God. With his help, we too have spoken these few words. Since you are pleased and delighted, praise Christ, the source of all knowledge and wisdom, to whom be praise and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 19 ON THE DROUGHT THAT OCCURRED, THAT IS, ON THE LACK OF RAIN, AND HOW WE OUGHT TO BE DISPOSED IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Human life is for us a precise teaching about the judgments of God, about His wisdom, and about His providence that penetrates everything, not only concerning what is allotted to us in general but also concerning what happens to each one in particular. And it would be a sufficient warning for us regarding what must be done, and a fitting approach to divine and charitable thought, to consider what happens daily, to praise and recognize, even partially, the wise pilot and guide; for the Lord is recognized when He executes judgments, as the Psalmist says. Indeed, if we were disposed in this manner and diligently considered what is done for us, and if, in the face of our sins, we measured the benefits that come from above and those actions that are warnings—I do not say "these plagues"—then, concerning what happens in our favor and according to our desire, we should thank without measure the One who, even when we sin, helps us without making us suffer. On the other hand, when some sorrows and difficulties come upon us, we should bear them with goodwill, repeat philosophically the divine words, and say to the soul in sorrow: "Do not turn away your face from the correction of the Almighty; for He causes us to suffer, and again He restores us; He strikes, and His hands heal." And: "It is for a few of your sins that you have been struck with rods." For if, concerning what we grasp and understand by paying attention, we find the wisdom of God, His justice, and His charity, then likewise, concerning what we do not understand—because truly His judgments, as it is written, are a great abyss—we can yield to His incomprehensible wisdom and let ourselves be persuaded that this too has been allotted with charity and for our benefit. May it come to pass that we give thanks in all things, according to the Apostle’s admonition!

Now, this has been said for no other reason than this lack of rain, which was recently suspended over us, the dry air that was above our heads, the earth that was stifled by drought, and then, because of the abundant rain that came afterward, where there was no longer any remembrance of sins, but which was delayed so that we might become aware of asking the Giver, and which was granted before we ourselves had asked as we ought, so that the gift itself might be attributed to the goodwill of the Giver and not be the reward of the request. For it is He who cries

out through the prophet: "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will say, 'What is it?'" Otherwise, if the unspeakable waves of all this charity had not preceded the wrath that was suspended over us, to what rage would the furious wasps of the Nestorian heresy not come? They buzz with disagreeable and impure words, move between houses, and slip into the depths of dwellings, and perhaps through one or two foolish little women, they communicate their leprosy, while the whole city is healthy and, by the grace of God, closes its ears to their words. For they truly said that the reason the earth was condemned to thirst was that the impure dogmas of the Dyophysite error were anathematized, as well as the fathers of these (dogmas) and the impious writers who divided Emmanuel after the ineffable and unimaginable union, by the duality of natures. For they are accustomed to forging such things and inventing fables, because in former times as well, after Nestorius was driven out by a sentence of judgment that came from heaven and from above, Bishop Dorotheus, afflicted like him with the same rage, wrote to some that it was because of the unjust deposition of Nestorius that there had been fires in the imperial city, raids by pillagers and enemies, and the fall of the Roman Empire. These, indeed, are the things they spew forth from their muddy hearts, sometimes by forging and inventing, sometimes by gaping at the flesh and seeing only what is placed at their feet, unable to lift their spiritual eye to future hopes and remaining ignorant of what concerns the Sacred Books.

As for us, although we regarded the drought that God once prolonged over us and the abundant rain that He had forbidden the clouds to pour out and had stopped as a trial of the orthodox faith, which now has shone brightly on all those in the East, we thought it was a chastisement when we applied our intelligence to the teachings of the divine Book. For it is customary for God to test with pains those who have enjoyed certain benefits, so that, like slaves struck with rods and rebellious, we may know, in the time when we are helped, to recognize the Master, and in the time when we are chastised, not to deny Him. Thus it is written that He chastised the children of Israel. Indeed, after leading them out of Egypt and delivering them from harsh servitude, after showing them that He is the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, after giving them knowledge of Himself and proving His invincible power by all these many signs and miracles, immediately He led them through affliction and presented them with

the trial of chastisement. For He allowed Pharaoh to pursue them with a great number of chariots and horsemen, while their flight through the Red Sea became inescapable and without exit. And when they were caught in the middle and were troubled and anguished in their souls no less than in their bodies, they degraded themselves by murmuring ignobly and as befits slaves, remembering their Egyptian servitude and mentally returning to the banks of the Nile, they who were soon to dip their feet in the Red Sea. But the great Moses was inflexible. After looking terribly at those who murmured as if they were little children and rebuking them as a master, he said to them, as much as the time allowed: "Have confidence, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you today. For as you have seen the Egyptians today, you shall see them no more from now on and forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." Now, Moses said these words to the people, but to God, nothing. Yet even when he was silent, (God) heard him: "Why do you cry to Me?" For for men clothed with God and who are holy, even if their lips are bound and their tongue nailed, their spirit cries out to God. And this is what Paul, writing to the Romans, said: "But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." For the soul that is attached to God speaks to Him continually, and it possesses the help that comes from Him, as the prophet David also says: "My soul has clung to You, and Your right hand has upheld me." It was at the moment when Moses, being silent, cried out in this way that he heard and immediately received the order to stretch out his rod, to strike the sea, to divide the waters, to make Israel pass, and to engulf Pharaoh. And after the expanse of the sea was divided, there was a wall on the right and a wall on the left. For I will use the very words of the divine Book, because only He who did this is worthy of faith to recount His own miracles, and also because, even when He is inaccessible, He speaks to us as humbly as possible, so that these divine thoughts may be easy to grasp, as far as it is possible for our earthly intelligence. Now, who was it who worked the division of the Red Sea? It was Christ, who was prefigured by the rod, about which Isaiah, when prophesying, said: "And a rod shall come forth from the root of Jesse." And David also called it a mighty rod, saying: "The Lord shall send You the rod of strength out of Zion, and You shall rule in the midst of Your enemies." Thus, the waters of the Red Sea were a wall on both sides for the children of Israel, but for Pharaoh and the Egyptians, (they were a wall) for a time,

as long as those who were pursued walked between the wet and fixed walls of the waters. After they had crossed and stood on dry land, the wall of waters, when it broke, flowed and spread according to its nature, became a tomb for those who had been left inside the sea, and covered the pursuers along with the entire army, their horsemen, and their chariots. Therefore, those who were saved sang a song of victory, saying: "Let us sing to the Lord, for He is gloriously glorified; He has cast the horse and its rider into the sea."

But moreover, trial, suffering, and torment followed this marvelous salvation and this fearsome and grandiose miracle. Indeed, when they had walked for three days in the wilderness, thirsty and without drink, after the fire of a thirst that was so long, they encountered the very bitter waters of Marah, which He who commanded Moses to perform miracles made sweet immediately. Likewise, after the abundant gift of manna and the bread from heaven and that extraordinary source of waters (coming) from the unfissured rock, struck with the rod, which was the remedy and healing of another thirst, they were tested by the battle with Amalek, with that cruel and barbarous people, whom they subdued and destroyed with force and power. After they arrived at Mount Sinai, they received legislation: Moses, on the summit of the mountain, received above the tablets written by God. But the jealous demon, the Slanderer, unable to bear the greatness of the glory, presented below the temptation of idolatry and set up as a god a calf that recalled the error of Egypt. And, to speak simply, throughout the entire journey and course of forty years, (the children of Israel) had enjoyed the grace of God without measure and had been tested by chastisements. Thus they obtained the Promised Land, which Moses, at the end, also by elevating (their spirit) and recalling these (events) to their memory, mentioned by way of profitable instruction: "And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you in the wilderness, to humble you and to test you and to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not." And again: "And you shall know in your heart that, as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you." This is what Paul also referred to when he wrote in his letter to the Hebrews, saying what is treated philosophically by Solomon himself in the Proverbs: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."

How then, knowing this, when we were chastised as sons by the lack of rain and by the drought, shall we bear the Father’s trial unwillingly and be in anguish? Or how could a man endowed with intelligence and moderately versed in the divine Scriptures imagine, based on the chatter of the impious, that God was angry because of the proclamation of the orthodox faith and because, as on a stele, the sons and disciples of the abomination of Nestorius would be anathematized in a clear declaration? Indeed, punishment and the trial of chastisement are quite distinct from one another. When examined instinctively, at first glance and superficially, they seem in every way to be one and the same and not different. But when observed according to the nature of the things in question and when their context is also known, there are many differences between them. Therefore, those who cannot discern such things, but who, in the face of trials and difficulties, immediately recoil without waiting for the end, being truly shaken in their faith and agitated by contrary changes, our Lord compared in the Gospels to seeds that are sown on stones, when He said thus: "And that which was sown on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles." We find a similar trial also in the Acts of the Apostles, where it is written thus: "And Barnabas, it is said, went to seek Saul at Tarsus. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. Now it happened that they were gathered together for a whole year in that church and taught a great multitude, and it came to pass that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. Now in those days, prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them, named Agabus, stood up and signified by the Spirit that there would be a great famine throughout all the world, which indeed also came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar." Now, as one of those who have the thoughts of this world heard these words, where it is said: "What are you saying? While the preaching of the Gospel has taken its course, count a countless multitude, that the believers were then first called Christians, and that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, saying: 'Those who serve Me shall be called by a new name, which shall be blessed on the earth,' should not this name bring every blessing, fair weather, abundant fruits, deep peace, so that all the world might know by the facts themselves that the name of Christians is truly a source of blessing, so that there might be a much greater number of believers, adhering without hesitation to this teaching procured by trial? But you, you prophesy to us immediately that a famine

will come, so that this name may provide men with happy blessings, as is likely." But you will say: "It is necessary that (God) torment the persecutors of those who proclaim the word. Therefore, it was necessary that not the whole earth share in the punishment at the same time, especially not the disciples of piety." But to think this is the mark of those who regard the flesh. For those who know the laws of the Spirit know precisely that it is through tribulations, such as drought, that God is accustomed to testing men, and they are of the opinion of the wise Paul, who says: "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

Therefore, after such painful beginnings, namely these trials and struggles, the great and divine mystery of the Christians has come to this total appeasement. Consequently, as can be seen from current events, because of our weakness, we are no longer even worthy of a full trial. For (God) only brought the chastisement near over us, but He did not truly chastise us; He threatened, and, in His charity, He removed the threat; we cried to Him, and He heard us. Indeed, He did not forget His own word, He who said: "Ask, and it shall be given to you." Therefore, He gave, not because of our righteousness, which in truth is not distinct from a menstrual cloth, as a prophet said, but because of His promise. Now, it must be carefully considered that He did not say only: "Ask, and it shall be given to you," but He added: "Knock, and it shall be opened to you." Therefore, when we ask, what obtains is, on the one hand, the word coming forth by means of the tongue, but also, on the other hand, the act of knocking, which is done by means of the hand. Consequently, for every action and fulfillment of a commandment, it is the hand that can truly knock and open the door of Jesus. He Himself, therefore, has followed this conduct which is proper to Him: He gave when we asked Him, to urge us to knock at His door by means of fasting, deprivation of bathing, sleeping on the hard ground, chastity and purity, vigils and offices, and above all, by means of mercy for our neighbors and by giving of what we possess. For this hand especially, before knocking lightly and nearby, so to speak, finds open that door which even the lamp of virginity could not open because it lacked oil, as the example of those five foolish virgins makes known.

It is necessary, therefore, that we be concerned with the gifts that come to the aid of the poor. For if, as the Apostle says, "as the elect of God, holy and beloved, you put on a heart of mercy," you will not despise the stranger or the naked. Now I admire the greatness of the Apostle's word and thought, and I am filled with wonder. Consider, indeed, how he said: "Put on a heart of mercy." It is with mercy and a heart for our neighbors that he asks us to clothe ourselves, as with a mantle. Now he who is clothed with this (mantle) gives to the poor all that he possesses. And when at every opportunity he abandons what he possesses in favor of those in need, he does not consider himself naked in any way, being clothed with a heart of mercy. As for me, it happens that I weep when I reflect to what degree and height of perfection we are called, to what depths we are dragged in our spirit, and to what hardness and kind of cruelty of a wild beast we hasten, even toward the cultivators. These, indeed, on the one hand, pray in the same way as their masters, that abundant raindrops may descend without causing damage, that, one following the other, a truly serene sky and rays of sun that warm the seed may shine, and that there may then be fair weather in the air. But, on the other hand, they alone labor, while these (masters) take no part in it with them. But when the time of summer has come, after the harvest and the gathering of the fruits, it is to each of the cultivators that, like a cruel demon, the steward or the master of the land himself comes to stand, holding in his hand a document, stained, poorly written, now blackened as if by time and worn out in evil days, as the divine Daniel says, or even a volume covered with dust and filled with cobwebs. Then, after he has opened the document and fixed his eyes on it, and read those erased, invisible, hard-to-decipher characters that were known only to him alone or that by deceit and in appearance seem to be known, and moved his fingers to count, and murmured between his teeth some small words, and hurried somewhere in haste, and after that simulated an appearance of nonexistent anguish, and scratched his temples, and rubbed his face several times, and showed hesitation in this, he mocks the cultivator himself in the height of misery and says: "This harvest of fruits is not sufficient for the payment of (your) debts. There remain with you arrears (of debts) that you have perhaps tripled or quadrupled, coming from the cycle of past years." O the ignoble and abominable word! He does not find it sufficient to take the fruits that are there, but, by the reminder of the arrears of debts, he deprives him in advance of those that are to come. What complaints does this wretch utter when he returns to his house, in his native patois, lamenting with some violence and

heaviness, making his complaint louder and crying out words like these: "Woe to me because of my labors! Woe to me because of my profession as a cultivator, in which I have toiled without profit! Now I remember my oxen, which I drove with the goad and excited to open the furrow; now (I remember) the plows, the hoe, the uprooting of thorns and brambles, the sickle with which I reaped the ears, and the (pruning hook) with which I pruned the superfluous shoots of the vines. The proofs of these excessive labors, here they are on my hands, on which I shed many tears. Ah! the harvest of my fruits, which before the harvest was dear to me and well worth a prayer! After this, it is hateful, despicable, and saddening. When (the grains of wheat) were sown, I trod them with my feet, and when they were harvested, I took them with my hands. And when they were stored in the granary, I spent the night near them to guard them. And I am prevented from putting them even under my teeth, since I have not even been permitted to eat a single loaf of bread. With what eyes shall I see my wife, this companion of (my) cares for cultivation, this helper in (my) labors? When I sowed and when I harvested, she brought me my food out in the fields. She shared my bed to sleep, also kept watch with me, and at the same time reflected and thought about the harvest of the ears and clusters, (a harvest) that now the master of the land has reserved for himself and enjoys alone. How could I be (strong enough) when I see her weeping? And how, when she clings to me, leans on me, and grieves with me, could I stop my lamentations and not add more? What food could I offer her in exchange to persuade her to bear this intolerable affliction bravely? And how shall I look upon my children? One, being of age to do so, drove the pair of oxen with me and rivaled me in fatigue with the hoe, and, for the harvest, sharpened his eagerness rather than the sickle. He was trained and diligent in all the best methods of cultivation. Of the two younger ones, one, often when I sowed, carrying the seeds on his chest, gave them to me, and the other, throwing stones with a sling at the birds that pecked the seeds, pursued or chased them, frightening them by other means."

At the time of summer, once the season of fruits had come, they both sat in the field and in the shade to guard the fruits, unaware that, after guarding them with such care, they would not even keep a small portion for themselves. It seems to me that henceforth these youths, in their spirit, will have nothing but horror for the countryside and likewise for cultivation, as for what can bring them only groans

and tears. Are these things, then, bearable? Would they not bow even a soul harder than diamond? Was it not due to the cultivator himself, even in a very small quantity, to receive at least the wages of his labors? Or have you not heard Job, when philosophically he counted this among the great iniquities, saying: "The weak have cultivated the vineyards of the impious without food and without wages"? And James, one of the disciples of our Savior, when he wrote in the Catholic Epistles, as if to highlight the greatness of this sin, spoke thus: "Behold, the wages of the laborers who have reaped your fields cry out, and the cries of those who have reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." Then you, O lord who care only for mud and earth—but not at all, indeed, for perfection—or rather you, O slave of wickedness and all the hardness of wild beasts, is it by these blows that you think to open the door of Jesus? And what! Are these things, and similar ones, not enough to close even the floodgates of heaven that in the days of Noah submerged the whole earth, and to prepare for us winds and misfortunes of this sort, unless we quickly change? Therefore, the prophet Amos also says: "I also have withheld the rain from you when there were yet three months to the harvest. And I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city. One piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. And two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, and were not satisfied. Yet you have not returned unto Me, says the Lord. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew, and you have multiplied your transgressions." Do you see that God brings such afflictions for no other reason than to make us return to Him?—"What then? Do you command us to forgive the debts of the cultivators?"—Yes, I say, on the one hand, if they have resulted in this total and extreme penury, they need to be forgiven. If, on the other hand, they are at a loss of half, why should they not have installment payments (?). For you, if you wanted to repent of your sins, you would not pay all your debts to God at once either. However, propose to yourself a good and charitable intention, and you will not need our words, and it itself will teach you what must be done.

Now I see that it is not only in the village that you behave as the account has just depicted you, but you act the same way also in the city square, threatening, provoking, dragging to court, bribing (with gifts), dishonoring, striking, demanding what is unjust, running past without pity, as if they were inanimate stones, those who stand in the roads, holding out (their) hands and asking only for an obol,

which could be effective help for hunger and indigence. Therefore, you seem to me even to be incurable. For if you committed iniquity against some, though you had pity on others, surely you would have no reward. For there is one, it is said, who builds, and there is one who tears down, as a wise man said. What has he gained more than useless labors? When you commit iniquity in this way at every hour, what hope would you have? Now, when you were divided in yourself between cruelty and mercy, were you going, upon hearing the words of instruction, to permit yourself, on the one hand, what is unnatural and worthy of a wild beast, and to apply yourself, on the other hand, to natural perfection? Indeed, God can change us, even when we are incurable: for what is impossible with men is possible with God. To Him be praise in the ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 20 ON THE ENCOUNTER WITH OUR SAVIOR, THAT IS, ON THE FEAST OF HOSANNAS AND ON THE WORD: "BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES." TABLE OF CONTENTS

When our Lord and God Jesus Christ was about to willingly go to the salutary cross, to fulfill the entire divine plan (Economy), to endure all contempt and ignominy for us, and to humble Himself even unto death—as if standing at the threshold of this great undertaking—He demonstrated His invincible strength, supporting the weakness of our spirit, so that we might not slip into uncontrolled judgments because of His voluntary sufferings. Indeed, after descending to Bethany, He raised Lazarus, who had already been in the tomb for four days, thus prefiguring His destruction of the dominion of death, which He would fully abolish by descending into Sheol Himself and freeing the souls imprisoned there. Therefore, as the One who would raise Lazarus with a mere command as if from sleep, He said: “Lazarus, our friend, sleeps, but I go to awaken him.” Then, as children and the crowd with them praised this prelude to the victorious battle over death—for this is what the evangelist John particularly indicated—they went to meet Him from the direction of the Mount of Olives, near the gates of Jerusalem. See then how, knowing in advance what would happen and learning that they were coming to meet Him, Jesus arranged His entry to be worthy of God and in some way symbolic. Through this, He also prefigured His second glorious coming, without neglecting the humility of His first coming and the entire period of His incarnation, during which He progressively revealed His divinity in accordance with the divine plan (Economy). For He ordered His disciples to bring Him a colt, unyoked and unridden by any man. After sitting on it, He was ready to proceed. This colt prefigured the believing people of the nations. The donkey, indeed, is unclean and cannot be eaten according to the Law of Moses, nor can it be offered as a sacrifice, being defiled and abominable: its hoof is not cloven, and unlike the ox and the sheep, it does not chew the cud. Now our Lord Christ, on the one hand, turned His face away from the disobedient people of the Jews—though He was pure and His hoof was cloven (for He had learned from the Law to separate and distinguish good from evil) and though He also chewed the cud (for He consumed and meditated on the commandments of Moses). On the other hand, He chose the people of the nations, who had not been instructed by the God-given Law, had not learned to distinguish good from evil, were not under the yoke, had given

themselves to shameful passions, and had become rebellious—a people on whom no man had sat (for they had neither a God-appointed judge, nor a prophet, nor a teacher). Thus, this people of the nations, unclean like the donkey, is the one He commanded His disciples to free from the bonds of ignorance and the worship of demons. The three evangelists mention that only the colt was tied, but Matthew adds that the mother who bore the colt was also tied. Thus, the colt itself was bound by a double bond: one of the rope and the other of nature, for it followed its mother, bound by love for her. This figure also shows us in advance a great ray of truth, indicating that the people of the nations were unnaturally bound by the chains of sin and atheism (i.e., polytheism) and, as if by nature, bound by long habit, unable to sever this unbreakable bond that had become like their very nature. The disciples of Christ untied the colt with ease and brought it to their Master, first placing their garments upon it. When Jesus saw that this was done—He who is truly the God of great mysteries—He mounted and sat upon it. We can further admire how clearly the truth is shown through the manifest meaning of these events. For as soon as the believers from the nations clothed themselves with apostolic virtues, like garments, and as teachers of piety and even martyrs arose among them, then the grace of Jesus—or rather Jesus Himself—sat upon them, dwelt in them, and rested upon them, just as it is written that He sits upon the Cherubim, because He rests upon those holy hosts themselves. For He is followed, as the prophet Isaiah says, and He rests upon the saints. This is also prophesied by Zechariah, as the Gospel of Matthew confirms, showing that the colt was with the donkey. For the prophecy says: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you, righteous and having salvation; He is humble and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Who, upon hearing "righteous King," would not immediately understand Christ, who was also prefigured by the name Melchizedek, which means "King of Righteousness"? The prophet did not merely say "righteous King" but added "having salvation," indicating the name of Jesus, which, when translated, means "Salvation of God" and "Healing." Then he added: “He is humble and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey,” to prefigure the One who would later say in the Gospels: “Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.” No other king, simultaneously righteous, saving, gentle, and seated on a donkey, has ever come to Jerusalem—except the One who alone is King of kings, God and Savior, Jesus, “abundant in mercy to all who call upon Him,” as it is written. Thus, as He sat on the colt,

prefiguring the believing people of the nations, a great crowd accompanied Him, carrying palm branches. Not content with this alone, they also spread olive branches and garments on the road. These things could not have happened unless they signified great mysteries. For the donkey walking on branches and palm leaves clearly showed that not only the One riding it but also those who would believe in Him would subdue all their enemies, trample them underfoot, and achieve a glorious victory—for branches and palm leaves are emblems of victory. Moreover, the people laying their cloaks on the ground proclaimed, as if immediately and manifestly, what would later be revealed in reality. For when these believers renounced all their possessions, even their garments—a symbolic act—they followed the Gospel of grace. As it is written in the Acts of the Apostles, all who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds, and laid them at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made to each as anyone had need. If this had not mystically prefigured what was then happening, the branches and garments would have hindered the donkey's movement, entangling its feet like nets. And the crowd, those who went before and those who followed, cried out: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" This phrase, translated from Hebrew to Greek, means: "A hymn or psalm to the Son of David." In pronunciation, we omit a sigma in "Hosanna," so it sounds like "O salvation." Being praised or honored with a psalm belongs not to man but to Him who alone is God by nature, as the Psalmist says: "I have put a new song in my mouth, a hymn to our God," and: "I will sing to my God as long as I exist." Those who cried out also added: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" And as Luke adds: "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" These words proclaim His second coming, when He will return from heaven in glory, joining earthly things to heavenly by peace, judging the whole earth with righteousness, and ushering the righteous into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, it was young children who praised Him and cried these words, for when He entered, they also entered the temple with Him. As He Himself said: "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Consider also how the branches symbolized victory, with which the crowd honored the One who was praised in a manner worthy of God. The evangelists who wrote that as He approached and neared the descent of the Mount of Olives, the crowd began to welcome Him, go before Him, praise Him, and cut branches from the

trees, clearly show that these were olive branches, for they came from the mountain named for olives. The olive tree signifies God’s reconciliation and His merciful coming to us—not because of our righteousness, which does not exist, but because of His mercy. Just as a dove carrying an olive branch in its beak signaled the end of the flood in Noah’s time and the cessation of wrath through mercy and peace from above, so too does the olive branch now signify divine reconciliation. The evangelist John adds, beyond the others: “When they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him.” O blessed words of John, higher and more sublime than all! Truly, he is the "son of thunder," for he thundered the doctrines of theology for us, leaving nothing empty or indifferent, even in mere narration. The palm tree showed that the One who was praised and who comes from above is heavenly. For among all trees, it alone rises toward heaven, bearing abundant leaves at its top and white branches at its crown, while its lower part is rough, straight, and difficult to climb, with sharp points on its branches. Likewise, whoever pursues the knowledge of Christ will find the path difficult and rugged as they advance through the labors of perfection. But when they reach its height, as far as is possible for humans, they will encounter the brilliant light of theology and the revelation of ineffable things, like the very white palm branches. Therefore, the bride in the Song of Songs—who truly is the Church of those who believe in Christ—exclaimed: “I said, 'I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold of its heights.'“ The fact that some evangelists often add what others omit is not contradictory but reveals a more precise account. For contradiction undermines what another has said, whereas exactitude does not. Such are the mysteries of this present feast, through which Emmanuel has shown Himself to be the true God. After saying these things, He added more: driving the buyers and sellers from the temple, He showed it to be His house, saying: “It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer.'“ By this, He demonstrated that all things belonging to His Father are His and that the God of the New and Old Testaments is one. And He healed the blind and the lame who came to Him in the temple.

But the chief priests and scribes of the Jews, hearing the children cry, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” burned with anger and gnashed their teeth, greatly offended that they glorified the Son of David and praised Him as the Most High—just as those who divide Him by a duality of natures after the union are offended today. So they said to Him: “Do You hear what these are saying?” And Jesus replied: “Yes. Have

you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants, You have perfected praise'?" If, as the impious say, the One who was seen was different and separate from the One who was hidden, He should not have answered "Yes" or claimed what does not belong to Him, confirming it with the testimony: "Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants, You have perfected praise'?" For the prophet David sang this to the Author of all and to God: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth! Your glory is set above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants, You have ordained strength." He immediately gave the reason why praise was perfected from the mouths of children: "Because of Your enemies, to silence the enemy and the avenger." This especially shows that the Psalm refers to the person of the Son, for He accepted the praise of children to rebuke and confound the vengeful Jews who, in their jealousy, harbored hostility against Christ, imagining they were avenging God when they blasphemed Him. But Christ, the Author of all, prepared praise from the age of infancy—"You have perfected," as if to say: "The age of the praising children is imperfect, but the praise is complete and most perfect." For how could it not be perfect, since it was not diminished by the humiliation they saw but praised the One seated on a colt as equal to the One enthroned on the Cherubim, confessing Him as truly the Son of David and the Most High God? For He who is by nature the Son of God, without change or confusion, became according to the flesh the Son of David, uniting to Himself flesh from the Holy Spirit and Mary, the Virgin Mother of God—flesh consubstantial with us, animated by a living, rational, and intelligent soul. For He is one, without separation, from two: divinity and humanity. Thus, He is one Son, one Christ, one person, one hypostasis, one incarnate nature of God the Word. Where then are those senseless supporters of Eutyches' delusion and Apollinaris' folly? Did I need deceptive juggling or the denial of reason in the divine incarnation to show the innocence of children's praise? Or do you suppose the colt signifies a stain or defilement in Emmanuel, and would you also make the donkey's mother a figment of imagination? While you are ashamed to confess the true beginnings of the immutable incarnation of the Word, will you blush in all things equally, and will imagination be the veil of your shame? Or will you wear a different shame? For who, in their right mind, would be ashamed of these things, so worthy of God, even if they seem lowly? Do you not confess what is salutary for our race, rejoice, and take pride in these things? Though Emmanuel could have given us His glory, He chose to partake in our

lowliness. Thus, He brought help without diminishing His fullness or His natural self-sufficiency. He erased sin but did not take sin upon Himself. Just as He created man sinless and without defilement in the beginning, so He renewed him in the incarnation, becoming man without change, free from all stain. But it is time to end the homily, lest by prolonging it, we detract from the brevity of children's theological stammering. You too, honor it by leading your children not to theaters and horse races, finding harmful entertainment for their souls, but by bringing them to church and saying to Christ, the Author of all and God: "Out of the mouths of our babes and nursing infants, I have prepared praise." May God grant us, with them, to obtain the kingdom of heaven, for to Him belongs eternal and endless kingship, power, and glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 21 CATECHESIS DELIVERED, AS USUAL, ON THE WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK (THE WEEK OF THE PASSION), ADDRESSED TO THOSE WHO WERE ABOUT TO BE DEEMED WORTHY OF HOLY BAPTISM. TABLE OF CONTENTS

The term "catechesis" fills me with great fear, and rightly so. For I consider within myself not so much what must be said as what must remain unsaid. I will not trust new ears, untrained in hearing divine doctrines and still in need of milk rather than solid food, as the wise Paul says. This is why this very form of teaching is called "catechesis," or resonance, for it accustoms the ears of the listeners through a sounding, like the blast of a trumpet that introduces the words, lest they approach the thunder of theology unprepared and, shaken by this voice speaking thus, unable to bear its intensity, they become troubled and confused. This is already found in the sacred books. When Moses was about to receive the divine Law from God—and through him, the entire multitude of the people of Israel—on the one hand, he alone ascended the mountain, as he had been commanded, and on the other, he stationed the people below at the foot of Mount Sinai, already purified, as it is written, and as much as possible, he had purified them beforehand. And before the words and revelations of the Law were proclaimed, trumpets sounded a powerful and terrifying blast, while the mountain itself was covered with a dark cloud, surrounded by lightning, and inspired fear in those who saw and heard. Such is the mountain of theology: accessible to those who, like Moses, are perfected—and this only when God calls them, for without the divine call opening the way and sustaining them, even for those like him, it is entirely incomprehensible. But for those who have been purified only moderately, as was the case then for the children of Israel, who were purified only temporarily, it is not only incomprehensible but also inaccessible and unapproachable. Yet it is not entirely inaccessible, for they are permitted to stand nearby, to hear the trumpet preparing them for the hearing of the introductory words, that is, the doctrines, and to receive somewhat obscurely the first words of the teaching, like flashes of lightning from the cloud that illuminate and move swiftly. And through progress in perfection, they will draw near, attain it, and be lifted up by hearing. The divine Scripture confirms this, saying: “There were trumpet blasts that grew louder and louder. Moses spoke, and God answered him with thunder.”

Therefore, we must first sound the trumpet, then strengthen the power of the breath, and thus interrogate God, speak to Him, and hear what comes from Him, transmitting and conveying the words to others. But because I am no longer sufficient to sound the trumpet, much less to speak to God or be the minister of His words, I make use of the pastoral trumpet of the Fathers and teachers of the Church, like the son of an experienced shepherd, who is far inferior to his father's skill but has inherited the tools of the trade. These Fathers lived for God when they departed this world, and now they stand around us, watching us with the spiritual and incorporeal armies. And it is from the doctrines they labored over that I will sound the trumpet and say what was spoken to them by God. For they, adhering to the Law, the Prophets, the Gospels, and the Apostles, taught us to "believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." By saying "one God," they rejected the error of the pagans and cast down the multitude of false gods, whom—I know not how—the fables among them introduced and, as it were, made to dwell in the heavens, saying with the prophet Jeremiah: "Let these gods who did not make the heavens and the earth perish from the earth and from under these heavens." And by professing the Father, they clearly showed that He is the beginning and source of existence and the sustainer of all that is—yet not without the Son, coeternal with Him, who created the universe together with Him. For how could He properly be called Father if there were no true and genuine Son, sharing the same essence and nature, through whom He is also called Father of all creatures, insofar as they were created through His beloved Son? For He is Father by nature of the Son as begotten, and by grace of the creatures as created, granting them existence through creation.

Therefore, when you believe in one God the Father, you who hear this preliminary teaching—or the beginning of the entrance—also profess that He is almighty, and renounce the evil principle of the Manichaeans, the origin of evil according to their reasoning, which these fools also called "uncreated darkness" and claimed to be an independent essence—though it is without existence or hypostasis—and they opposed it as a tyrant to the one true principle who holds all things, that is, the true, spiritual, and essential Light. And they say that evils flow from Him as from a foul source. But if they assert that the evil principle is uncreated and without beginning, they must also say that it is infinite. For what is uncreated and without beginning is inherently infinite. What place, then, will belong to it, and to the good principle,

since He too is infinite as uncreated and fills all things? For either each of them will be finite, and they will cease to be God, since finitude is alien to divinity, or if they are infinite, it is impossible for both to be infinite simultaneously, since they are divided in will and essence. Indeed, “what fellowship has light with darkness?” according to Paul’s word and the truth itself. But if we concede, as if by indulgence, that they are both infinite and uncreated, we must posit a third principle, also uncreated, placed between the extremes, separating the two principles and restraining them. Yet those who forge these impure and womanish abominations—for they are not doctrines—say that the evil principle lusted after the good, ran like a lover toward its light, tore away a part of it, and devoured it, and “thus the creatures came to be, possessing a mixture of each.” O inconsistent and foolish absurdities, full of unreason and madness! For how could what is evil by essence desire the good? The properties of essences are fixed, I think, in every way and immutable, and this is certain even from the definitions of nature, because the good God, who is good by essence, is also fixed, firm, unmixed, and without inclination toward what is contrary. And what is this voracity by which evil devoured a part of the good? Did it, like carnivorous beasts, tear it apart with its teeth and devour it, like the Kronos of fable, who, as the story goes, devoured his children? And is the good itself subdued as weak and cut in half, deprived of a part that belonged to it, no longer whole and intact, like those wounded in the foot or with an arm cut off? But it is chiefly because of this that the good will have warlike dispositions toward evil, this rapacious and voracious thing that has devoured its prey like a whale. Thus, the good itself will be inactive as weak, and evil alone will prevail, create, and precede this visible world. Hence, we are subject to a single principle that has prevailed and triumphed, and the fabulous fiction of two principles proves vain even for the wicked themselves. For their part, the evil principle—or evil itself—and the uncreated darkness cannot subsist in themselves if they contain within them a part of the good that has been devoured, for this will be a cause of disturbance. For just because it has been devoured does not mean it has passed into the essence of evil; hence, it disturbs and opposes. But disturbance can never be the source of support for any being. Thus, the absurdities of the Manichaeans are destroyed like a spider’s web. And we must confess one almighty God, essential light and subsistent goodness, who “enlightens every man coming into the world,” as it is written.

"But where, then, do evils come from?" they ask. From where? From free will. For God made us in His image when He gave us a rational soul bearing divine characteristics within itself, because it is incorporeal, because it extends and directs itself through intellectual operations toward whatever it wills, as far as possible, and because it is not confined to any place, and because it can acquire virtues, such as justice and the rest. For it is by essence that God alone is just and justice itself, but by participation that we are so, as we rise toward imitation of Him. This is why we have also been honored with primacy on earth, for we have heard: “Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and every living thing that moves on the earth.” And it has been granted to men, by generosity, to be masters of themselves and free, and God has entrusted us with the reins of our lives. For the image itself would be severely lacking if we were led by some external force instead of being, according to the model in whose image we were made, endowed with free will and liberty. But we did not use this honor as we ought, and “when man was in honor, he did not understand,” as it is written. Indeed, we were bound to desire spiritual and divine beauty, to obey its laws, and to turn the energy of our free spirit toward it. But having turned our eyes away, we descended into sin, which is spiritual blindness. Just as God created for us an eye capable of receiving light and guiding the steps of our feet, and yet if we willingly darken it, we ourselves are the cause of that blindness, so too He fashioned the intelligence within us like an eye, which can comprehend divine things and shine with the light from above. But if we darken it, immediately the darkness of sin arises in us like blindness. Now blindness is the privation of light, and God is not the author of privation, for He is the creator of essences, not of nothingness and non-being. Thus, sin and evil are nothing and non-essence, for they are a change of good will. "But we should have been created immutable with respect to sin," they say. These are surely the words of those who would legislate, and as the Apostle says, “the clay should not say to the potter, "Why have you made me like this?” And those who say this seem to me, on the one hand, to despise what is rational and, on the other, to prefer being wood and stones rather than men, for these are immutable with respect to sin. "But we would wish to be rational beings and never to be changed or transformed with respect to sin," they say. Such is the opinion of those who even soar above nature and wish to ascend to the divine essence. For only the holy Trinity, uncreated, without beginning, and unproduced, is immutable in nature and untransformable. But all

creation is subject to changes and transformations. As for the angelic hosts, they are not immutable natures, but divine grace has seized them along with the perpetual contemplation of the holy Trinity—or rather, of the illumination that comes from it. After the Slanderer, of his own will, turned his gaze away from this vision, though he was part of one of those good hosts, he became the instigator of darkness. Likewise, the intelligent spirits who rebelled with him suffered the same fate, became evil, and, out of envy, waged war against man. But we can say with Paul: “The love of Christ constrains us,” and through the battle waged against these evil spirits, He makes us more tested—but only if we ourselves do not deprive ourselves of love and grace. When Adam did this, he was deceived by the Evil One and became an exile from Paradise.

Therefore, we must believe that God the Father is "almighty" and has absolutely no opposing principle facing Him, as the impiety of the Manichaeans claims, and that He is truly "the Creator of all things visible and invisible." Let us not set up different gods based on the opposition of visible elements, nor think that one is the author of fire and another of water. Rather, let us consider that this world is composed of things opposed in a single harmony and good order, and for this reason it is called "cosmos" (order), and let us praise Him who has so ordered and harmonized what seems discordant. For when we see a lyre rightly made of disparate strings to produce a single harmonious melody, we praise the lyre-player.

Now when you believe in one God the Father, believe also “in one Lord Jesus Christ, His only Son, begotten of His essence, consubstantial with the Father, Light of Light, true God of true God,” the Word, the Life, “the image of the invisible God,” “the imprint of the Father’s hypostasis.” For He is designated by all these names because a single formula cannot encompass what He contains, but each of them signifies a single attribute fitting for God, even if, when compared to others, it seems inadequate or insufficient. For when you hear "Son," understand only that He is consubstantial with His Father, for every son is of the same essence and nature as his father, according to the manner of his begetting. Do not, therefore, lower your thought from this to bodily births, nor imagine the union of bodies, the emission of seed, or passion. But pass from the designation of "Son" to that of "Word," and you will find that He was begotten without emission of seed, in an

impassible and incorporeal manner, like speech. For just as our speech is begotten impassibly by the intelligence within us and, when uttered, reveals and makes known by the emission of sound—as if representing it—the very thought hidden in the depths of the intellect, so too the ineffable God the Father, the supreme intelligence, is represented by the Word who proceeded from Him by generation. For it is written that He is “the Angel of great counsel” and “the image of the invisible God,” who says: “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” This is why He is also called "only-begotten," because He alone proceeded from the Father alone, in a unique and wholly different manner from all other births, and in this too there is no commonality. But our speech, when it proceeds from the changing intellect, disperses into the air and vanishes, whereas the Word of the living Father, the unchanging and supreme intelligence, is Himself also living, subsistent, and eternal. For it is written: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Do you hear that “in the beginning was the Word” and that “He was God”? How, then, can you say that He who is, like our speech when uttered, does not subsist? But if the Word “was”, and “was God”, and “was with God”, He was eternal, for He was “in the beginning”. Now, in a beginning without time, it is impossible to find a limit. For “through the Son”, as it is written, “the Father also made the ages.” To say that the author of the ages and time is later than time is madness. Therefore, the Son is coeternal with the Father, and He did not come into existence at the end. It is He who was incarnate for us in the last days, becoming man from the Holy Spirit and the holy Mother of God, the ever-virgin Mary. And the reason for the incarnation? It is man, made in His image, who, because of his own folly and the deceit of the Slanderer, as previously written, was excluded from the blessed and painless life of Paradise. For it was fitting that He who is by essence the image of the invisible Father, the living Word, should come to seek after man, who had turned to corruption—man, endowed with reason, made in the image of God by participation and grace, whom He had sent to death, saying: “You are dust, and to dust you shall return,” and not only this, but whose existence He had judged and condemned by pronouncing this decree upon Eve: “In pain you shall bring forth children.” Therefore, without change, He partook of flesh and endured death for us in the flesh, desiring to abolish these two sentences. For it was not in the power of any man to render them void, since all had been subjected to the snare and trap of death. "But," they say, "He should have permitted one of the ministering spirits to accomplish such an economy, not have

God stoop to this." But first, no one could achieve this and loose the bonds of corruption except He who by nature is incorruptible and immortal, the almighty power of the invisible God. Moreover, it was not fitting for an angelic and created power to perform such a restoration, which belongs to God, lest men themselves fall again from the truth and serve the creature rather than the Creator. But it was fitting for Him who could to undertake the Economy concerning us, so that those who would be saved might worship Him who is both Savior and God adorable by nature. This is why the prophet Isaiah also cried out: “It was not a messenger or an angel but the Lord Himself who saved us.”

Therefore, we will not divide Him after the union according to the duality of natures, lest we be accused of idolatry, worshipping alongside God, in the folly of Nestorius, a man subsisting separately by himself. But we will confess Him as one and the same from two natures, divinity and humanity, and in worshipping Him, we will be beyond reproach. For just as the Word of God partook of blood and flesh, which is animated by a rational soul, so too we, when the soul is hypostatically united to the body, become one man from two, without the soul itself being changed into body or the body into soul, and the living being is said and understood as one nature, without diminishing or changing or transforming those elements from which it was naturally formed. Likewise, the Word of God, when united by nature and hypostasis to the humanity taken from us—which is perfect according to its own definition—was born of the holy Virgin according to the flesh and was called Emmanuel, showing also that those elements from which the union was made are not confused, for they remain in their natural qualities, though the properties that subsist no longer subsist separately, as if still divided by duality, for there is one hypostasis from the two. Therefore, we must anathematize those who say that this one Christ, after the ineffable union, constitutes two prosopa or two hypostases or two natures, with their operations and properties, and do not confess Him as one prosopon, one hypostasis, one incarnate nature of God the Word, or who deny that He was incarnate in true flesh consubstantial with us, or conceive of it as soulless or mindless, and by these opinions render our salvation false or imperfect. Believe, then, that God Himself, who was incarnate, endured the cross for us in the flesh, was buried, destroyed the corruption in the tombs, descended into Hades, shattered the unbreakable and reinforced gates, loosed the indissoluble bonds, and brought out the captives; that He rose from the dead on the

third day, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. This is said, not because the Father has a right or left side—for how could such properties appear to Him who is infinite, incorporeal, and fills all things?—but because the divine Book, using our language, shows the royal majesty of the Son and His equality of honor with the Father.

We must also believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father. For just as our breath accompanies our speech, so here—though the breath disperses into the air, while there the Spirit is living and hypostatic. For the Spirit is the Spirit of life, consubstantial with the Father and the Son, and for this reason is counted with them as possessing the same praise, divinity, kingship, and eternity. "Go," He says, "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." He also created the visible and invisible world together with the Father and the Son, for it is written: "By the Word of the Lord the heavens were established, and by the Spirit of His mouth all their host." It is through Him that you will receive the gift of adoption. Therefore, when you have believed in one God, who is seen in one essence in three hypostases, renounce the slavery of the tyrant—that is, Satan—and the evil and destructive armies subject to him, saying: "Let us break their bonds and cast away their yoke from us." Do this by turning toward the west; then, turning likewise toward the east, proclaim your covenant with Christ—not because the west has been allotted to the Slanderer and the evil demons (for "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"), but to show by this gesture that you have fled the darkness of sin and run toward the spiritual light, hastening to your paternal dwelling, Paradise, planted toward the east.

Because you have now driven far from you, by the invincible power of the word alone, the tyranny of the evil and rebellious demon—oppressive in wickedness but weak in falsehood—and because he has been shown to flee and scatter like smoke with those who cling to him, and because you have taken refuge in the invincible right hand of Christ, confessing His lordship with a word free from deceit and full of good will, the Lord Himself, who at first formed man from dust but saw His creation defiled by Adam's transgression, will now fashion you anew by water and the Spirit. And when the jealous and shameless Slanderer sees you proceeding to the water, he will rally and pursue you again, saying to his demons, as Pharaoh did to the Egyptians: "Why have we done this, letting Israel go so they will no longer

serve us?” But take courage: the waters will advance, and He who “crushed the heads of the dragons in the waters” will engulf them. Once, the waters were deadly and bitter before the heads of those who spewed deathly venom were crushed, but when the sign of the cross was traced upon them, it made them sweet and life-giving. This was prefigured long ago by Moses in a very clear symbol. In Exodus, he wrote: “They came to Marah, but they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore, the name of that place was called Bitterness. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" And Moses cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.” Who, even among the most perverse, would doubt that this tree prefigured the life-giving cross and the baptism accomplished through it? For the words “He showed him a tree” signify the revelation of the hidden mystery, and what follows—”There He made for them a statute and an ordinance”—foreshadows nothing other than the perfect laws of the Gospel. The prophet Ezekiel also foresaw these life-giving, healing waters that grant spiritual health, writing: “And He said to me, "These waters flow toward the eastern Galilee, descend to the uninhabited land, and come to the sea toward the waters of the passage of the sea, and they will heal the waters. And it shall be that every living creature that swarms there, all on which the river comes, shall live, and there will be very many fish, because these waters come there, and they shall be healed and live.” These waters that flow in Galilee and cross the sea are the Jordan, into which the seed of holy baptism was cast by our Savior—waters that descend to the uninhabited land, which represents us, deserted and devoid of all divine grace, idle and empty according to the Gospel’s word, where seven very evil spirits once dwelt. And the words “they descend” show the mercy of a gracious God, by which such grace came down upon us who were unworthy. “And it shall be that every living creature that swarms there, all on which the river comes, shall live.” He calls "creatures" those who, in the diversity of animal passions, became like animals of every kind, whom the salty and troubled sea of this life made to swarm. Yet, after the Jordan came upon them, it granted life even to them, who were once dead in the salty waves. The prophet adds: “And there will be very much fish there, because these waters come there, and they shall be healed and live; everything on which the river comes shall live.” This clearly shows the renewal and re-creation of the old, dusty man, for “the first man was of the earth, earthy,” as Paul says. And the divine David also sings concerning the God of all: “Remember that we are

dust.” For since we buried the rational image of the soul in the mud, we are named "dusty" rather than "rational" from our lower part, since we are of the same dust. But the prophet Ezekiel, foreseeing from afar the multitude of those who would come to baptism, said that they were made of dust and dead in the mud but would be healed and live by these waters: “And there will be very much fish there, because these waters come there, and they shall be healed and live; everything on which the river comes shall live.” I will pass over many other necessary things, lest the homily become excessively long. But you, as you go to the life-giving river, remember me, I beg and implore you, for I am still submerged in the salty waves of suffering, and you can grant me no greater favor than this. And the triune God will give you what you ask, for He is acknowledged and praised as One, in whose name you are to be baptized. To Him be praise, glory, and power, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 22 ON THE VERSE: "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?" (MT. 27:46; MK. 15:34) AND ON WHAT WAS SAID BY OUR LORD TO THE THIEF: "TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE" (LK. 23:43). TABLE OF CONTENTS

Perhaps some of those who, after the ineffable union, divide the one Lord and God Jesus Christ into a duality of natures, being led by human thoughts, ask—thinking to confound the pious—"Who is the one who cried out on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" For us, we say with wisdom, guided by the sacred Scriptures, that it is God the Word, who became incarnate without change, who cried out these words. He who voluntarily became poor for us, and who, as He became man, called the Father His God. For He was nailed to the wood insofar as the body hypostatically united to Him was nailed. He remained impassible as God, yet He was not alien to suffering: the body that suffered was truly His and no one else's. Therefore, it is right to believe that the suffering was also His. For if, in your impiety, because you say there is a difficulty here, you separate from His flesh what was united to it, know that He had a rational and intelligent soul. Or else, you cannot say He was alien to suffering. Indeed, if Peter, that first pillar of the holy apostles, had not clearly known that the incarnate Word—He who also suffered for us—is one Christ, he would not have said of Him in his epistle: "Christ suffered for us in the flesh" (1 Pet. 4:1). Instead, he would have spoken of two Christs. Therefore, the Christ who suffered for us is the one from the seed of David. For no one, speaking of a man who is not identical with God, could rightly say that He suffered for us in the flesh unless he knew that it is the same one who, as God, is impassible, but as man, is passible. That is why he added "in the flesh". For this unity of God the Word with the flesh is sublime and indivisible. It necessarily entails this determination—that is, this addition of a specific difference—by saying "in the flesh". That is also why, in the Acts of the Apostles, it is written that the same Peter says: "Jesus of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it" (Acts 2:22-24). See, therefore, how he clearly and truly acknowledges the same one as both man and God, impassible and unable to be held by death. For if the same being were not immortal by nature, though mortal because He became flesh, He would not have said: "Because it was not possible for Him to be held by it" (Acts 2:24). He also said to the Jews in another passage: "You killed the Prince of

life" (Acts 3:15). Thus, the same one is both passible in the flesh and, at the same time, beyond suffering by His divinity and exalted. As man, He is said to have been raised by the Father. But as God, it is said that He could not be held by death. Likewise, Paul, writing to the Romans, says that Christ is "from the Jews according to the flesh, and the same is God blessed forever. Amen" (Rom. 9:5). He also writes in the first letter to the Corinthians: "One Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him" (1 Cor. 8:6). And again, in the letter to the Hebrews: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). Similarly, the divine John, writing his epistle, says: "We are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 Jn. 5:20). But Our Lord also cries out in the Gospels—He who is of Abraham according to the flesh—saying: "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn. 8:58). And again: "No one has ascended into heaven except He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man" (Jn. 3:13). For although He became flesh from Mary and consubstantial with us, yet because of this unity with the heavenly, He is called the Son of Man who descended from heaven. In the same way, He says: "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me" (Jn. 6:56-57). And this is so even though we do not eat the Word as Word. For how could one partake of Him who is intangible, bodiless, no longer visible to the eyes, and cannot be grasped by the teeth? But because this wondrous union unites Him to the flesh, the flesh also gives life, though it remains what it is, without changing or passing into the nature of the Word. And so we eat the Word when we eat the life-giving flesh of the Word. That is why He says: "He who eats Me will live because of Me" (Jn. 6:57). Since, therefore, the sacred books of the Spirit know one Son who voluntarily descended to empty Himself, who humbled Himself for us to our poverty, and who is no longer separated in any way from the flesh—having united it without confusion, change, or transformation—and since the same being does divine things divinely and suffers human things humanly, how, O you who perhaps by chance, according to the madness of the pagans, consider the cross foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18) and think it improper to say that God is the one who was crucified—how do you feel shame at these words, when you ought rather to marvel at what brings salvation to all under heaven? And in your ignorance, you ask, as if about one who had two sons and not one who suffered for us in the flesh: "Who is the one who said on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46). If indeed He

humbled Himself to the point of coming beneath the measure of poverty and becoming flesh (Jn. 1:14), according to the word of John, how could He refuse the words proper to the flesh, for which He endured the cross?

Indeed, as the first of our nature, He offered prayers for all humanity, drawing down mercy from above upon the whole human race. For we are the ones who were forsaken and despised, who, through Adam's transgression of the commandment, had become enemies of God: slaves, under the yoke, subjected to the tyranny of the Slanderer. That He did not say these things about Himself, He has clearly shown us in Psalm 21, which in prophecy beforehand proclaimed these words of the Gospel concerning the redemptive suffering of Christ, saying: "My God, my God, hear me, why have you forsaken me? My salvation is far from the words of my sins" (Ps. 21:2). But how could Christ rightly say these words about Himself? For what personal faults would He pray, He who committed no sin, and in whose mouth no deceit was found? (1 Pet. 2:22; Is. 53:9). Is it not clear to those who are not very familiar with the divine books that it is for us—we who have sinned, who have been in faults and crimes because of Adam's transgression—that He said this? How, then, is the immensity of such a gift not utterly astonishing? He who knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21) ascended the cross. And again: "The written record of sin, which was against all our nature, He destroyed" (Col. 2:14). He conquered the Slanderer, for the devil found nothing in Him that was his own. For us, He appeased the Father, uttering these words fitting for our race: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46). Otherwise, how could He be called the "mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5), the Emmanuel? For the mediator is the one who brings together those who are far apart. But how could He bring them together if He does not accompany each of the divided parties? By generation, He is with the Father in essence and divinity; yet the same one is consubstantial with us in humanity. He alone suffices for this and truly could say, on behalf of our nature deprived of freedom, these words that invite us to reconciliation, and to pacify by the cross what is on earth with what is in heaven (Col. 1:20), as Paul says. For what seems to you as lowliness—these are the words He cried out for us on the cross. And for this, you divide the only-begotten Son into two! So that you attribute to the one from the seed of David, as these adversaries are wont to say, what befits a man forsaken by God. What we understand through piety and in truth is proven to be worthy of God. For it was neither an ambassador nor an angel who

saved us, but the Lord God (Is. 63:9), who came manifestly (Ps. 49:2), as Isaiah and David the prophet said. Through Him, as through the head of our race, we have been freed from accusations. Therefore, through Him, as through the one who purified us from all defilement, we dare to cry out to the heavenly Father: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46). Therefore, you have not understood that for us He took upon Himself this defense in a divine manner. Instead, you have made it an occasion for blasphemy, lowering Him who is great—for He is great, even if for your sake He spoke humble words. That He was not forsaken by the Father at the moment of His suffering, you can clearly see when He said to His disciples as He went voluntarily to the saving cross: "Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own, and you will leave Me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me" (Jn. 16:32). How, then, shall we not miss the mark and rightly bear the condemnation of impiety, with words that are contrary to the sacred expressions of Our Lord, saying that He was forsaken by His Father when He says: "I am not alone, for the Father is with Me" (Jn. 16:32)? Likewise, what He said: "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me" (Lk. 22:42), is not the words of one who fears death, but of one who speaks of the divine economy. And by these words, He provoked the Slanderer, so that the cross would nail Him who was about to become the Savior of the whole world. For because the devil had deceived Adam, making him hope that he would become God if he tasted the forbidden fruit from which he was barred, he expected to deceive Him as a man when he met Him in temptation, though the same one is God by nature. But this refusal of the cup also prepared the shameless excuse of the Jews, for they said: "If He had not shown this refusal (of the cup), we would not have sinned by crucifying the one who ran to suffering and willingly embraced it."

Yet in these words, there is another kind of teaching, most worthy of God: for it is for our progress, as in a figure, that He said these things, instructing us concerning the dangers related to religion: "Do not fear for your soul, do not rush into misfortunes, but pray that the cup of death may pass. But if it does not pass, let us receive it courageously and say: Not as I will, but as You will" (Mt. 26:39). That these things are indeed teaching and not the result of fear is clearly testified by the book of the Gospels. For how could He fear death, He who with sovereign desire went to that death, saying: "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover" (Lk.

22:15)? And to Peter, who could not bear the prediction of the cross and said: “Far be it from You, Lord! This shall not happen to You!”—He replied with strong rebuke: “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men” (Mt. 16:22-23). Therefore, to ask of each Christ “who is the one who said: “Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” (Lk. 22:42), or “who is the one who was nailed to the cross and said: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?” (Mt. 27:46)—this is the work of the paganism of Nestorius and those who divide the one Christ into two natures, hypostases, and prosopa. But consider how Nestorius interrogates like one seizing occasions to fear a mixture and making pretexts that there are occasions for faults: “Who is the one who also endured the slaughter? I am compelled to use less exalted words so that all may know what is being spoken of. To whom does what is accomplished belong, tell me? If it is to the nature of the divinity, how do you dare to mix the two? Although the God Word remained incomprehensible to the Jews, and in the slaughter did not share in the flesh, from where, tell me, do you introduce the mixture?” And in another passage, the same Nestorius impiously questions concerning the verse: “They will look on Him whom they pierced” (Zech. 12:10; Jn. 19:37), saying: “What then is wounded? The side? But the side belongs to the body and not to the divinity.” And again: “Listen to the blessed Paul asking clearly: Who is the one who was crucified? Listen, then, to this even clearer word: For He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God” (2 Cor. 13:4). “If He was crucified in weakness, who is weak, O heretic? God the Word?” In the same way, the wretched Theodoret poses the question in his refutation of the tenth chapter of St. Cyril: “Who, then, is the one who went to the limit of the labors of perfection without being of a perfect nature? Who is the one who learned obedience in temptation” (Heb. 5:8), “and did not know it before the temptation? Who is the one who lived in fear, who offered prayers with tears, and could not save Himself, but besought Him who was able to save Him and asked to escape death?” (Heb. 5:7). For this kind of impious questioning, he also made use of the Tome of Leo—he who ratified that fruitless assembly of those who gathered together at Chalcedon. For he asks: “What nature, pierced by the nails, hung on the wood of the cross?” (Leo, Tome). Because there is no change in his question: “Who and which?” It is the same question as those who speak of two natures, as is clear from the words of the impious Theodoret. For having said in the refutation of the tenth chapter of St. Cyril: “In temptation, that nature which was taken from us

and for us partook of our sufferings, and not the one who took this nature for our salvation," in the refutation of the twelfth chapter, he says: "Therefore, it was not God who suffered, but the man who was taken from us by God." You see that the nature is the man whose nature was taken, once he has clearly shown that those who say Christ has two natures also say He has two prosopa. And since for them there is no change in these (natures), they ask: "Who and which?"—which is also affirmed by the Tome of Leo of Chalcedon.

But for those who know that the Emmanuel is one prosopon, one hypostasis, one nature incarnate of God the Word, such a question that divides the one indivisible Christ is regarded by them as contempt and slander. For to ask concerning the One: "Who or which?" is an obvious absurdity, since the Word of God, who became incarnate and was made man, hanging on the wood, was pierced with nails, suffering in the flesh what is of our (nature). For this is also the reason why He became incarnate—being incapable of suffering in that He was and is God. For if even after the Incarnation, the Word of God were not corporeal and did not struggle with God, you would rightly say that the side pierced by the soldier's spear was of the body and not of the divinity. But if He who was incorporeal by nature became corporeal by the Economy for our sake without change, then this body is truly His, and this side of the body is also truly His in every way. Why, then, do you separate the flesh from Him and ask, like a sophist: "Whose is this side?"—while you say He is incorporeal even after the Incarnation, because of the Word of God? He, therefore, who became incarnate for our sake, with tears and fear, offered supplications for us (Heb. 5:7) when He said: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?" (Mt. 27:46). For if you think He is slandered and humiliated by these words and because of His voluntary weeping, is the Incarnation—that is, the becoming man—also a reproach, for which He also said these things? And why, when you concede the first, do you accuse the second? But Paul, knowing that it was God who voluntarily suffered these things, said: "Who, in the days of His flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death" (Heb. 5:7). And he did not say this of a man who was not at the same time God. Just as He who before the days of His flesh was without flesh took it upon Himself, for our sake, to say and suffer that for which He became incarnate, so also, having taken upon Himself the suffering of the weak, He went to the limit of the suffering of the strong, so that it is the same one

who is voluntarily weak in the flesh and divinely strong. But they persist in the same impudence and ask further, thinking to trap us in difficulty and a dead end: "Who is the one who brought the thief into paradise?" But we, taking up orthodox thought and the book inspired by the Spirit, careful to follow in the footsteps of the initiators of the Church's mysteries, say this: God the Word, willing to save us completely and having become incarnate of the Holy Spirit and Mary, the Mother of God and ever-virgin, did not unite to Himself only flesh, but flesh animated by a rational and intelligent soul. Therefore, we also call this Incarnation an "inhumanation", professing that He left nothing of the human essence unassumed, but united it entirely to Himself, for He was in all things like us, except for sin (Heb. 4:15). For Adam was neither soulless nor unintelligent when he transgressed the commandment and fell into the snare of death. Therefore, when healing was needed, Adam needed it not in part but in his whole being as a living, rational creature, so that it might be said that the whole work was taken up by the Word of God in this hypostatic union and was saved. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22), according to the word of the wise Paul. Therefore, God the Word, when He humbled Himself to voluntary self-emptying, became man without change, and salvation came to us through all that had been prepared for us, also took it upon Himself to come to the trial of death, to which we were bound because of sin. That is why Paul says: "For the death He died, He died to sin once for all" (Rom. 6:10)—not that He died because of His own sin, for He knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21), but He paid the debt on our behalf to blunt the sting of sin (1 Cor. 15:56) and destroy the dominion of death. Therefore, He died our death. But our death is the separation of the soul from the body. That is why He also cried out with power worthy of God: "I lay down My life for My sheep, and no one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (Jn. 10:17-18). And concerning the cross, He said: "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Lk. 23:46). And having said this, He gave up His spirit—yet in this too He did not despise the measure of the lowliness of humanity. Rather, it was the departure of our soul that He willed to sanctify by these words, so that for us also, when we depart this life, He might commend to the hands of the heavenly Father our spirits, no longer imprisoned in the snares of death and the chains of sin. For the firstborn is all good for us and does all for us. For if we were to say, according to the follies of heresies concerning the departure of Christ's spirit, that it was not the salvation of the soul

but the salvation of the divinity, then it would not be our death that died, but His death, and we would vainly boast in the suffering of our Savior if by a foreign death, and not by our own, He had conquered the Slanderer. But it is certain that what procured victory for us is what will also call us anew, for "His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption" (Acts 2:27; Ps. 16:10), as the prophet says. Rather, on the one hand, the soul was separated from the body by the will of Him who governed all things, and on the other hand, God the Word—for it is He who directed them—united each of the (elements) in a sovereign, hypostatic unity, since He is the fullness, not divided in place as incorporeal, infinite, and capable of filling all things. By this union, on the one hand, concerning the body, He destroyed corruption and gave life to those in the tombs: "for the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised" (Mt. 27:52), as Holy Scripture says. On the other hand, concerning His soul, He opened paradise and brought in with Him the thief to whom He had promised, saying: "Today you will be with Me in paradise" (Lk. 23:43). But He added: "with Me"—and most rightly. For if the first Adam, because of sin, was banished and cast out from dwelling in paradise, it was not lawful for another to merit the delights of heaven before the second Adam rose for him and delivered him from that exile. Thus, God the Word, uniting a soul to Himself hypostatically, did not leave the body empty or deprived of its proper union. He opened paradise to the thief and went to the land of Hades, saying to those in bonds: "Come forth", and to those in darkness: "Show yourselves" (Is. 49:9). Having accomplished all these things in fullness and healing, He also restored to unity what He had voluntarily separated—He who is one of two, of divinity and humanity, possessing both perfectly according to their concept. He made the rays of the resurrection shine for us—that "sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2).

But beyond what has been said, another question concerning this verse must be explained. For some say: "How do we say that the thief entered paradise, when the apostle Paul, in the letter to the Hebrews, considers that the righteous enumerated from of old were justified by faith?" And he adds: "All these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:39-40). Some say (in response) that the apostle did not include the thief among those he enumerated but passed over him in silence, as having already merited

what was promised. For this reason, he did not say simply and without distinction: “All who were attested by faith did not receive the promises”, but he said: “all these”, applying his phrase by the demonstrative to those only who were rewarded and counted, among whom the thief was not enumerated. But others say: “The thief had not yet merited the dwelling in paradise, but because of his sincerity and the boldness of his confession, Our Lord said to him: “Today you will be with Me in paradise” (Lk. 23:43).” For He said: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away” (Mk. 13:31). For, they say further, there is in Our Lord’s words a similar way of speaking of the future as if it already exists, as when He says: “He who does not believe is condemned already” (Jn. 3:18), and again: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life” (Jn. 5:24). Others also forcefully interpret this verse to mean that we should punctuate it thus: “Truly, I say to you today,” and then add: “you will be with Me in paradise” (Lk. 23:43), so that the promise seems to refer to the future time. This is what they say. But the true interpretation is this: the good things promised to us are “the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 3:2), not the delights of paradise. For when Our Lord preached: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt. 3:2), He was not speaking of an entrance or exit into paradise. And He commanded us to pray: “Your kingdom come” (Mt. 6:10), without mentioning a dwelling in paradise. But perhaps someone will say: “The kingdom of heaven and paradise are the same thing, because they are two names for one reality that is the same in essence.” But the teaching of the sacred Scriptures shows that they are not the same, and the difference between them is great. For on the one hand, the good things prepared in the kingdom of heaven for those who love Our Lord—”no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived” (1 Cor. 2:9), as the divine Paul wrote. On the other hand, paradise—Adam’s eye saw it, his ear heard it, for he heard: “You may eat of every tree of the garden” (Gen. 2:16), though he had in view only one tree from which he was forbidden to eat. And it even entered his heart, for he was commanded to “cultivate the garden” (Gen. 2:15). For the cultivation of paradise was not some manual labor, but an intellectual delight was joined to it, along with the enjoyment of divine thoughts. And I pass over Paul’s rapture there, since he said: “Whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know” (2 Cor. 12:2). Likewise, this thief merited paradise, for He who said: “Today you will be with Me in paradise” (Lk. 23:43) is no liar. And these good things in hope of the kingdom of

heaven—like the righteous of old who did not receive the promises—he also awaited and did not receive, "since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:40). For that these good things kept for us in the promises are nothing other than the kingdom is evident from many passages, especially from these words that Our Lord, as it is written in the Gospel of Luke, said to His disciples: "You are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I assign to you, as My Father assigned to Me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom" (Lk. 22:28-30). But along with this kingdom promised to us, we also have paradise, which is a place of spiritual rest. Therefore, we must marvel at the supremely wise dispositions of Our Lord, from whom we have received some mitigated glimpses, though we cannot speak of them fully. For when this thief showed such faith and despised the pain of the nails—for he was nailed to that cross by both hands and feet—he rose above all that was at his feet and flew toward those future hopes, crying out those magnificent and wondrous words that surpass man: "Remember me, Lord, when You come into Your kingdom" (Lk. 23:42). He who scrutinizes our thoughts, admiring the greatness of the prayer and the sublimity of the (thief's) faith from what was about to happen immediately, confirmed him in the hope of what was to come, saying: "Today you will be with Me in paradise" (Lk. 23:43). "For the others who believe in Me," He said, "have benefited from signs and teachings, and through these have received the word concerning the kingdom. But this one, though he has heard and seen nothing concerning Me except the ignoble death on the cross, utters this generous word: "Remember me, Lord, when You come into Your kingdom" (Lk. 23:42). What then? That he might at once have delight in paradise as a dwelling and pledge because of his faith? But he will also obtain in the end the kingdom in which he begged to be remembered."

Just as a hero, hastening to bring victory, runs to enter the city, carrying trophies and the choicest spoils, wishing thereby to make his victory bright, most joyful, and most glorious, announcing the promises of victory—so also Our Lord, hastening and about to enter the first dwelling of man (I mean paradise), brings this thief, this trophy more renowned and glorious than any panoply, and of all that was seized from the Slanderer, the most precious of all, fulfilling in deed what He had said: "When He binds the strong man, He will plunder his goods" (Mt. 12:29). When the spirits of the righteous hear these words—those whose

venerable dust is deposited here—they leap for hope and exult with you who are the Church of God. That is why our Fathers also, on the solemn day of Pascha or after the feast of the Resurrection, decreed that we should first gather in the place called the "cemetery"—since by their actions they deeply shared in the redemptive suffering of Christ and His resurrection, showing that death is a sleep. Therefore, when He returns, He will say to each of those lying here what is written: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (Eph. 5:14). These are they who, even now offering prayers for us, will restrain the wrath that weighs upon us and put to flight the corruption that destroys. Let us pray still to be worthy with them of the kingdom of heaven, by the goodness and love of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

## HOMILY 23 DELIVERED IN THE GREAT CHURCH. ON THIS (WORD): "THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US." AND ON THE NECESSITY OF CARING FOR THE POOR, BOTH DURING OUR LIVES AND WHEN WE DICTATE OUR LAST (WISHES). TABLE OF CONTENTS

I remembered that I owe a particular debt to some of you, and it seemed to me that I should pay it in full to the whole Church. For I had promised to explain how to understand what was said by John, the theologian among the evangelists: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." In doing this, I do not diminish the promise made particularly to a few, since all will share in the payment of the debt, for the benefit of spiritual things, especially words, cannot be diminished. Thus, for each listener, the debt will be discharged, and at the same time, each will pass it on to his neighbor. We say, therefore, that God the Word, who was begotten by the Father in an ineffable manner before the ages, who in essence, glory, kingship, power, and eternity differs in no way from the One who begot Him—He came to a voluntary self-emptying and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and Mary, the Mother of God and Virgin. For at the very moment when Gabriel said, "Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you," we believe that at that same indivisible instant of time, the Word became flesh in an inexplicable manner, known only to Him, in the Virgin's womb. This was not a mere word but a declaration that became reality, the announcement spoken by the archangel. But we say that He became flesh, not that He was changed into flesh—far be it!—for as God, He is beyond all change, but that He united to Himself flesh consubstantial with us, endowed with a soul and intellect, in a hypostatic union. Not that the flesh, separated from the Word, had its own subsistence, but as soon as it came into existence, it was at once united to the Word, who is without beginning and before the ages. For with His own subsistence, this union simultaneously affected the Word, and this, as far as man can express it, is the unity of hypostasis—not that there was a kinship or a bond of love from the Word toward the child formed in its origin, but a natural union and encounter, like that which we also see in man. For we are composed of soul and body: natures dissimilar and unequal in essence to one another. Yet the mode of intimate union produces a single nature without change; the union of the two is a composite: one living being from two elements—a man—and we know that this is

a natural union. But the precise manner in which this unity occurs—that is, the mode of union—cannot be understood or expressed.

Now this image, I mean our constitution, Paul introduces as proof of the divine incarnation, saying: "Since the children share in blood and flesh, He likewise partook of the same," wishing to show by an inexpressible likeness this even more inexpressible mystery. For just as a child is already the rational man that we are—that is, a soul endowed with intellect (for this is what a man truly is: we are a soul and intellect; the body is not us but belongs to us)—so also the Word of God partook of the same, uniting to Himself blood and flesh, because He has a rational soul. Thus, from two natures—divinity and humanity—which He possesses perfectly according to their concept, one Christ is understood: one “prosopon”, one hypostasis, one incarnate nature of God the Word. For we also say that He was conceived and born because He united to Himself a body capable of conception and birth. Likewise, the holy Virgin is believed and confessed by us as the Mother of God, just as the One born is called Emmanuel.

Now, this comparison of the child to the man that we are should be used only to illustrate and represent the unity. For such is the value of comparisons that in some way they resemble what is proposed, but in another way, or for the most part, they fall short of the resemblance. For even concerning the man that I am, no one has seen the soul come into existence apart from the body, nor a body without a soul. But concerning Emmanuel, it is blasphemy to think or say anything of the sort. For God the Word, the Incarnation is not the cause of His being, for He is before the ages, above cause, reason, and time, being, like the Father and the Holy Spirit, the cause for all creatures of their becoming and their life. And for us, besides making us come into being, He has graced us with a better being through His becoming man. Therefore, "the Word became flesh" means that He became man without change, while remaining God. For the divine Scripture knows that flesh gives its name to man, and elsewhere that the soul alone, which is but a part, designates the whole living being, as when it says: "Hear my prayer, all flesh shall come to you," and: "Let all flesh bless His holy name." Conversely, Moses, speaking to the Israelites, says: "With seventy-five souls, your fathers went down into Egypt."

But the evangelist does not simply say that the Word became flesh; he also wishes to show His ineffable love. For if He had united to Himself only a soul, endowed with intellect and without a body, in this case, this mode of Economy would not be worthy of admiration, for it would be in some way akin to divinity and in no way foreign or external, since it is intellectual and incorporeal. But the fact that He took upon Himself, along with the soul, the opacity of flesh and descended to this point, in order to grant us perfect salvation—this is more admirable and truly surpasses all wonder. Therefore, since this is what the evangelist admires and what truly astonishes every mind, he exclaims in amazement: "The Word became flesh."

But someone might say: "To say that He became something implies a change in His nature, since He is changed into that which He is said to have become. For it is said somewhere in the divinely inspired book that Lot's wife, when she turned back toward Sodom, became a pillar of salt. And concerning Moses' staff, which he threw to the ground, it is said that it became a serpent." What, then, will you say when you hear David singing: "Lord, You have become a refuge for us from age to age"? And: "The Lord has become my refuge"? Did God undergo a change in His nature, ceasing to be God to become a refuge? Or again, when you read: "Abel became a keeper of flocks," do you understand that Abel was changed and left his nature, or rather that he took on the role of shepherd in addition to being the man he was? Thus, the expression "he became" does not signify a total change but that, in addition to what one is, one takes on something one did not have before. Besides indicating the proper meaning of the expression, this shows that it does not denote a single kind and proves that there are different meanings. Concerning the assumption of the flesh that God the Word united to Himself, we do not speak of it as if He took up a trade, like Abel, who took up the trade of shepherd; nor as if He assumed a function, as it is written: "All Israel recognized that Samuel became a prophet of the Lord"; but in a natural and hypostatic unity, as we said earlier, because it is also said that He became a curse, since He destroyed the curse by taking upon Himself, in our place, the accursed death, as Paul also says: "To those under the law I became as one under the law—though not being myself under the law—that I might win those under the law." But it is clear that when He abolished the shadowy observances of the law, our Lord also became a curse in this way—though He was not subject to the curse—to win those who were under the curse.

It is therefore also proven by this that the expression "He became" has various meanings, for it is not in the same way that He became a curse to remove and abolish the curse, and that He became flesh to remove and abolish the flesh—this would be the height of impiety—but He became man without change, while remaining God, so that He might also render me incapable of being led astray by sin, establishing His own stability in this changeable and weak nature. This is why the divine evangelist adds: "And dwelt among us," to show that the Word underwent no change in relation to the flesh. For the one who dwells is other than the place where he dwells. Yet we do not think that the Word's becoming man was a mere dwelling, so as to say, like that madman Nestorius: "He clothed Himself in our nature, for humanity became a tent for the Word"; and again: "Because of the One who is clothed, I honor the One who is clothed; because of the One who is hidden, I adore the One who is visible"—as if it were a matter of constructions and artificial temples, or as if it were the imperial purple and a cloak over garments. For that this word "dwelt" is also used of those united in one person, Paul testifies when he says concerning our body: "If our earthly dwelling—a tent—is destroyed," and again: "For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened." Thus, just as the soul, though its own body is a tent for it, is united to it in nature and hypostasis, and this union of two is one man, so God the Word, having become flesh and dwelt in our composite, and having been made like us in all things except sin, is one without change and undivided, far from being one who clothes and another who is clothed, according to the impiety of Nestorius.

But others have given a different explanation of this passage: this word "He dwelt among us" is the same, they say, as what the prophet Jeremiah prophesied through Baruch when he says: "This is our God; no other can be compared to Him. He found the whole way of knowledge and gave it to Jacob His servant and to Israel His beloved. Afterward, He appeared on earth and lived among men." Thus, what the evangelist says—"He dwelt among us"—means that He chose to dwell with us and lived among men, truly becoming man. For John the evangelist, they say, did not need this addition to dispel the suspicion of change. He placed it at the beginning because this starting point of theology, which makes all under heaven tremble, is the foundation of the entire mystery of religion. Not only does it show the being of the Only One who is before the ages, but it also sets forth in advance a teaching about the Incarnation. For when he says: "In the beginning was the

Word," by the words "in the beginning," he excludes the impiety of those who say, "There was a time when He did not exist," since He was in the beginning. But to be before the beginning, while being outside of time, seems to be among the impossible things. By the expression he uses: "And the Word was with God," he showed that the Word, as a hypostasis, is other than the One whose Word He is. And by saying: "And the Word was God," he makes it understood that He is hypostasized, which is not the case with our word, which, emitted as sound, passes through the air. But when he says: "The Word was God, and He was with God," he clearly shows that the two are of one essence, though not of one hypostasis, because there is one divinity for both, and it is the same essence. Then, as if to summarize all that is said in the chapter, he briefly adds the following words: "He was in the beginning with God."

But what I say now are words that enrich us, not only for theology but also for the concept of the Incarnation. For the evangelist, or rather the Holy Spirit who spoke through him, knowing the weakness of human thought, which cannot worthily receive this saying—"The Word became flesh"—since its ear has not been initiated beforehand by theology, and since it is lost in lowly and contemptible opinions, thinking a change concerning the Unchangeable One—For this reason, he first said: "In the beginning was the Word, and He was God, and He was with God," so that what "became" is not understood as a return to what was. For He who is without beginning, by the fact that He exists, for Him this existence is unchanging and fixed. This is also why He said to Moses: "I am He who is." Therefore, when you hear that He who is became flesh, do not understand another being who, departing or emerging from what He was, is no longer what He was in a true and hypostatic unity, for it is the same hypostasis. This is why no other evangelist except John alone says: "The Word became flesh." And though we believe that the Holy Spirit speaks in all, it is well known that this saying too he drew from the same source from which he drew his theology, he who reclined on the breast of Wisdom. For he who said, "In the beginning was the Word," immediately follows it with: "The Word became flesh," meaning that we should not understand "He became" in the same way as "He was." For just as "He was" denotes the natural divinity of the Only One, so also "He became" shows the true and not imaginary Incarnation, and that the Word came by love to a human birth, though without a second.

This reasoning indeed uproots with its roots the abominable folly of the imagination that some have falsely invented concerning the divine Incarnation. For if the Word is without change, since He was God and with God, and this continually, how does He become flesh? For he does not say that He was seen and appeared, as the fox with his fertile imagination would insinuate, but he says: "He who, having taken hypostatically flesh endowed with a rational soul, became man, while remaining God." Just as He became flesh, so also He appeared in the flesh, was seen by angels, as the wise Paul wrote. Let "He became" first enter your mind, so that when you accept "He was seen" and "He appeared," you do not stray by falling outside of pious thought. Since, therefore, it has been sufficiently given to theology in this way, since the suspicion of change has been cast far away, and since "The Word became flesh" rejects both imagination and doubt, the evangelist did not need the addition "He dwelt among us" to dispel change. For if it were so, they say, he would have said: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." But by saying "among us," he means that He lived among men, according to the prophet’s expression. Since, therefore, we have this double exegesis on the verse proposed to us, let us no longer despise either of them, for each is worthy of God, since it neither crosses nor displaces the boundaries of religion that our fathers established, as it is written.

What excuse will we have, then, if the Word, out of pity for us, became flesh and dwelt among us, to make us spiritual instead of carnal, and lifts us up to fly to heaven, while we, through our passions, darken our understanding and let our mouths crave earthly goods, making no account of those that exist only in heaven and that we can buy even at a very low price? For if you fed your brother when he was hungry, and gave him drink when he was thirsty, and through him to Christ, you would receive a share in what was announced by Love, who said: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But there are people with such low and pitiable dispositions: they have no children; they have no natural reason not to show kindness, having no sufficient motive to refuse to give to the poor, for those who are born have a rich Father in heaven who loves His children—indeed, it is He who gave them life. But they show the poor only hearts of iron, and this not only while they are alive but even when they leave this world or make their will, so that even

after death they display their invectives and lack of mercy toward their fellow men. As for the good they did while still alive, they were already dead. But once dead, they still commit iniquities, as when they were alive. For they have inscribed as their heir not Christ but one of those who in this world are abundant and powerful, who, by flattery, seduced them and made them share in some interests of this world. Wake up, wretched one, regain sound thoughts, and know who is the Lord of glory and true honor, which cannot be overthrown. Consider, I beg you, this fearsome and glorious coming of Christ, His descent from heaven, the terror caused by the angels and other incorporeal powers, the resounding noise of the trumpet that causes fear and unspeakable dread among sinners and gathers the elect so comfortingly from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other, as it is written. When, then, will you be honored, envied, and called blessed? Before this illustrious assembly and before all rational creatures? Or in the chamber of a very rich man, resplendent with alabaster tables, paintings, and golden mosaic floors? Before the angels standing around the King? Or before four or five barbarian slaves bought for a pittance? Before the Author of all nature, the One who crowns? Or before a man passible like you, who, hoping to inherit from you, troubled and deceived you with lying words, and who, as soon as you are dead and buried, mocks your folly, thinking of how much toil and unprofitable labor you amassed so many goods, while he voluptuously enjoys what was yours, believing himself generous by tossing a coin to the poor for the repose of your soul? Would to God that you were only laughed at! But now, since you behave in a way deserving of tears, you will go clothed in the many passions of the love of riches, your soul forcibly tortured by the flesh, bound by the bonds of bodily love, you will go into the air, and you will walk on that other path where crowds of wretches run after the stench of passions, like carrion birds circling over corpses. Then, in the midst of the darkness of these evil spirits, your soul will wander, seeing nothing, like the blind, walking not on paths of light but where it pleases them to lead it. It will dwell in the dark places it has prepared for itself by its evil works, and it will await that last day, when, receiving its body, it will stand before the Judge. Then, with what eyes, tell me, will you see that Judge—who judges without partiality—the One you did not feed, to whom you did not give drink, whom you did not clothe, to whom you attributed nothing in your will, as you did to those insolent, impertinent, and ungrateful people? Here below, when one prepares to plead or make a request, one does everything to appease the judge, deploys every defense, and gathers all

one's chances. But you, when you make this last journey and go to Christ, then you will not even be able to touch these family goods that are His, to present them to Him, and you will have preferred blood and flesh to your Creator, who for you became flesh and dwelt among us. What is more astonishing? The immensity of folly and insolence, or a total lack of faith? Will you be like one who cannot repay the one who came to his aid? Why do you not fear Him as Judge? For if you believed these words about judgment, you would not then have such a sentence of condemnation. You will therefore endure the trial of unquenchable fire, which you did not fear when you heard of it; you will suffer bitterly within, gnawed by the worm that does not die, with which the Lover of mankind threatened you, so that fearing it when you heard of it, you might be spared enduring it. But weeping and gnashing of teeth you will endure, at a time when weeping is useless for the afflicted, when it is no longer time to repent. Considering these things, therefore, let us turn back to ourselves, judging that nothing is more important than our salvation, not entrusting the administration of our goods to others, but making a generous account of our last resources, truly serving ourselves and going to the Judge provided with all kinds of goods. But if we still care for riches while we are alive, and if we prefer to be separated from the most tried members of Christ rather than from these riches, at the moment when we are about to leave them, even against our will—then, then, let us purify ourselves to give to Christ the Lord a little of His own goods, so as not to fall completely outside the kingdom of heaven. May we all be worthy of it, by His love and His grace, to whom be glory, honor, and power, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always, and unto the ages of ages! Amen!

## HOMILY 24 ON THE ASCENSION OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST AND ON THE PURPLE MANTLE GIVEN BY OUR PIOUS EMPEROR ANASTASIUS. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Today, Jesus Christ—called the Son of Man, of Mary, of Bethlehem, of Nazareth—ascended into heaven. O wondrous and sublime love! For He ascended as both a stranger and not a stranger, dwelling among the spiritual and incorporeal hosts. A stranger, because now, for the first time in His flesh, He sits upon His throne, surpassing that of kings and all principalities. Not a stranger, because, having become man without change for our sake, He never left that throne or heaven. As man, He lived among men; as God, He filled the universe. If someone goes somewhere as a stranger, it is rightly said that he has gone where he was not before. Likewise, though Christ filled the earth before His incarnation, it was said that He came to earth, and His coming in the flesh was believed as though He were outside it. So now, He has ascended into heaven in His flesh, though He fills all things and is contained by nothing. This is the fulfillment of the mystery: the entire mystery of the Divine Economy aimed at this—that we, who seemed unworthy even of the earth, might be raised and lifted to heaven by Him. Therefore, Paul, speaking of the love of God the Father for us, wrote: “He raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, to show in the coming ages the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6–7). What mind is broad enough to grasp the greatness of this mystery? What words can adequately explain it? Behold this herald and apostle to the Gentiles: when he speaks of grace, overflowing riches, and kindness—gathering all the finest expressions to signify such love—he is left destitute by the poverty of terms, overwhelmed by wonder, and adds these words: “This is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

Who would not marvel to see the race of men—once driven from paradise, subjected to the Slanderer (the devil), enslaved to demons and fleshly passions, worshiping wood and stone as gods—now seated on that throne above all kingdoms? This is by the power of Him who is from among us: God incarnate, unchangeably human for us, the second Adam, the Only Begotten, the Word before the ages, who alone sits with the Father and the Holy Spirit, both before and after the incarnation. Before the incarnation, He was simple and uncompounded,

incorporeal; after the incarnation, He is one from two: divinity and humanity. For the Word united Himself hypostatically, through the Holy Spirit and the Theotokos Mary, with a body consubstantial to us, like us in all things except sin, animated by a rational and intelligent soul. Thus, He remains one Son, not casting aside what He was (God), and becoming man without confusion. For this reason, He is called "Emmanuel", a name signifying one hypostasis of two natures. If He is of one hypostasis, He is also of one "prosopon" (person) and of one incarnate nature of God the Word. Thus, the adorable Trinity has not been increased. For He does not lie in any way when He cries out through the prophet: "I will not give My glory to another" (Isaiah 42:8). Therefore, this One of the Trinity was crucified, enduring the cross for us, though He is the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8). If, after the union, the duality were divided, the human nature would necessarily be non-adorable—because it would not be naturally united to Him who is by nature adorable, nor counted as one with Him "who did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Philippians 2:6). He, having risen from the dead, raised us with Him—we who had fallen through sin. He showed His disciples His hands and feet, the marks of the nails, and allowed them to touch Him, saying: "Touch and see that a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Luke 24:39). Thus, He silenced the reckless and insolent who say, "He was incarnate only in appearance." For can what is imaginary be touched or grasped? He did not stop there but further refuted their impiety by asking His disciples, "Have you anything here to eat?" When they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb, He took it and ate before them (Luke 24:41–43). He did this to show clearly that it was He who had risen from the dead—the same who, before the cross and throughout His earthly ministry, ate and drank with them, living among them as a man, as the prophet foretold.  But there is a deeper mystery: the eating of the broiled fish signifies the fulfillment of the Divine Economy—for the fulfillment of the Economy is my redemption. Our human nature, drowned in the moisture of dissolute life like a fish, was united to the Word of God, the mystical and unapproachable fire, which "grilled" and warmed it, extinguishing the passions and accomplishing this Economy so effectively that it became His sustenance. For the salvation of men is to feed on God, as He clearly showed in the Gospels when, pressed by His disciples to eat, He said, "I have food to eat that you do not know... My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me" (John 4:32–34). With the fish, He also ate honey, signifying that those burned by divine incarnation and made

partakers of His divinity, like honey, passionately accept His commandments, having His laws written on their hearts as on wax.

Having accomplished these and other mysteries, He who rose from the dead—pierced in His side by the spear, and in His hands and feet by the nails—ascended into heaven, bearing the marks of victory and triumph over death. These signs declared to the heavenly powers why this voluntary dead man, this living corpse, who was in corruption yet free from it, had become incarnate. For His body was capable of corruption, yet belonged to Him who is by nature incorruptible and cannot be bound by sin. Though He tasted death, He did not see corruption—this earthly and heavenly being, this scarlet robe made red by blood, shining resplendent with the rays of His divinity. Therefore, the intellectual spirits, seeing Him, cried out as Isaiah prophesied: “Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah?” (Isaiah 63:1). "Bozrah," translated from Hebrew, means "flesh." The garment is sometimes called flesh, as Job showed when he said, “You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews” (Job 10:11). They say, "We see Him coming from the earth, yet red and glorious: red as blood, glorious with a glory surpassing men." As David said, “In divine beauty, He has no equal” (cf. Psalm 14:3). In this glory above all, He exalts the flesh in a manner worthy of God. Paul, seeing the heavenly armies learn of the Economy concerning us, said: “Through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 3:10). This impassible One bore the marks of suffering, having become incarnate. He came adorned before the angelic spirits, glorifying in the salvation of men and the recovery of the lost. Shall we not fix our minds on things above, lifting our spirits from the earth? Shall we not soar on the wings of the spirit to that royal throne where we sit with the Father through the firstfruits of our race, Christ? Shall we not perform deeds worthy of heaven, in whose dwelling we shall be translated? When lust, greed, or other passions assail you, say: "I am ashamed before my firstfruits enthroned above. I fear the honor to which I am raised and dread receiving a provision for greater, inescapable torment." At once, the passion will flee, your soul’s boat will find calm, and the Lord of righteousness will reign in your members instead of sin.

Behold, our pious and Christ-loving emperor offers Him his purple robe and imperial mantle. For us, this symbolizes the good works we must do; for Him who gave the empire, it is a tribute of honor from devout hearts. He resembles those who spread their garments on the road as Christ rode triumphantly on a donkey, honored with palm branches by the crowds. Today, confessing with the heavenly hosts that He is the King of Glory—by whom kings reign and rulers decree justice (Proverbs 8:15)—the emperor fixes his gaze on the exalted One who humbled Himself for us, teaching humility and patience. Our empress, born of a pious emperor and raised in the imperial household, now lives with a God-fearing husband, more an emperor in spirit than in title. She despises the tyranny of luxury, mastering visible desires through contempt for them. Therefore, the universal Savior has honored their reign—even in this life—with heavenly delights, crowning their harmony of mind and orthodox faith, preparing them for the kingdom of heaven. May we all attain this by the grace and love of our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen!

**HOMILY 25 ON PENTECOST.** TABLE OF CONTENTS

Each of the divine solemnities contains a memorial of our redemption and the abolition of one of the sentences weighing upon humanity. For instance, how Christ was born and, by His coming in the flesh, revealed Himself to us as the true God. Thus, we celebrate the feast where God becomes visible, that is, the feast of His manifestation and birth. For, being born for the redemption and joy of the entire world, He destroyed the sentence pronounced against Eve: “In pain you shall bring forth children” (Gen. 3:16). Moreover, He tasted death in the flesh and put death to death by His own death. And when He rose again, He raised us with Him, and we celebrate the memory of His resurrection, which nullified what had been decreed for Adam when he tasted the forbidden tree: “On the day you eat of it, you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:17), and “You are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:19). After the resurrection, He ascended into heaven, and the Holy Spirit descended upon us when fifty days were fulfilled from the day of the resurrection. But He descended not by changing from one place to another—for how could He who fills all things do so, since “the Spirit of the Lord fills the inhabited earth” (Wis. 1:7)?—but by making known, manifesting, and revealing to us the action of the divinity. This is why we celebrate the feast of Pentecost, for through it, the last sentence that the Lord God had decreed against our race is destroyed—the sentence He pronounced when He was about to bring the flood upon the earth, saying: “My Spirit shall not abide in these men forever, for they are flesh” (Gen. 6:3). But this feast of Pentecost was already celebrated figuratively among the Hebrews, just as the feast of Passover was. It was celebrated in this way: during the days of harvest, when the sheaf of presentation was taken and its fruit was ripe, they took a sheaf from the field and lifted it up before the Lord. But they lifted it not on the same day it was taken, but on the following day. From that day, they counted fifty days, and the day when this count was complete was the solemnity, called Pentecost ("Fiftieth"). If you also wish to hear the written texts of the law, here is what it says: “You shall count from the day after the Sabbath, from the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; you shall count seven full weeks, until the day after the seventh Sabbath, you shall count fifty days” (Lev. 23:15-16).

Let us now pass from the figure to the reality: the sheaf of rational ears is that of our race—Christ, the Word of God incarnate for us. For He is our firstfruits,

without corruption, just as the first Adam was the firstfruits of corruption through the transgression of the commandment. That this was the first sheaf, the sacred book testifies, saying: “You shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest” (Lev. 23:10). And Paul calls Christ our firstfruits, saying: “Christ the firstfruits, then those who belong to Christ at His coming” (1 Cor. 15:23). This sheaf, just as the first was composed of ears from the field, was harvested from our race by the cross, the voluntary death, and the descent into Sheol. But on the following day, it was lifted up and sanctified by the resurrection, for our Savior says in the Gospels: “For their sake I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth” (John 17:19). Adhering, therefore, to this ancient figure, we count fifty days, not from the day the sheaf was harvested, but from the following day—the very day of the resurrection. Or rather, as the truth says, this ancient figure is connected to the reality in that the count of fifty days does not begin on the day the sheaf was harvested, but on the following day. May the figure of this sheaf also confound those who wander in the errors of Eutyches and deny that the flesh of our Savior is of the same essence as ours. For just as the sheaf is of the same species and essence as the ears of the rest of the field, so also Emmanuel is of the same essence in our flesh as we men are, whose sheaf and firstfruits He deigned to be. But behold another mystery: the one prefigured by this offering celebrated on the day of Pentecost: “You shall offer to the Lord a new offering. From your dwelling, you shall bring two loaves of bread as a wave offering, made of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be baked with leaven as firstfruits to the Lord” (Lev. 23:16-17). Each loaf offered as an oblation is a figure of Emmanuel. For He is the bread that came down from heaven and gives life to the world (John 6:51). From two-tenths of fine flour comes one loaf: from the divinity and humanity He possesses perfectly, each according to its nature. For the number ten is the sign of perfection, since it is a perfect number. On the day of Pentecost, two loaves were offered, not three, to show the revelation of two hypostases—the Son and the Holy Spirit. For the Father was already known beforehand. But when these two become known to us, we know one divinity in the Trinity. For whoever honors the Son and the Holy Spirit also honors the Father, since the Son is from Him, and so is the Holy Spirit. The fact that leavened loaves were offered also signifies another symbol. For when we celebrate Passover, it is also the feast of the Passage—”Phaseg” indeed means "passage." We have passed from the evil slavery of the Slanderer and the demons through the blood of the Only-Begotten, just as Israel of old passed from the

tyranny of Pharaoh and the Egyptians and the plague of the Destroyer of their firstborn by the lamb sacrificed as a type. They were commanded to offer unleavened bread, since we no longer had the leaven of Egyptian bitterness and atheism, as Paul also says: “For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor. 5:7-8). For those who have now come out of wickedness, renewed, must flee what is old. But after being redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ and receiving the seed of the Gospel teachings, we are commanded to also bear fruit—to offer leavened loaves at Pentecost. The sacred book adds the reason, saying: “They shall be baked with leaven as firstfruits to the Lord” (Lev. 23:17). "Firstfruits," it says, is this leaven. And this is why I do not turn my face away from it, for it frees and preserves from the old malice and bitterness; it makes bread and gives life. Concerning this leaven, our Lord says in the Gospels: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened” (Matt. 13:33).

But let us consider the figure of Pentecost more diligently, if you please, for the book of the law also says this: “You shall not eat bread or parched grain or fresh ears until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God” (Lev. 23:14). Here it expresses a perfect teaching: that of the new fruits and the seeds of the Gospel—that is, the bread that nourishes the perfect—it is not permitted to eat before the day of Pentecost, the day when the Paraclete came, the teacher of perfection. This too Christ clearly said in the Gospel to His disciples: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth” (John 16:12-13). What else did He mean by "all the truth" if not the perfect revelation of the Trinity? For we hear Moses and the prophets speak of the Father: “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel” (e.g., Ex. 5:1). But we hear the Son demonstrate His equality in honor and power with the Father, crying out in His teaching in the Gospel: “You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder." But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matt. 5:21-22). The words “But I say to you” belong to one who is a lawgiver with the power proper to God. Likewise, concerning the Holy Spirit, the servants of the New Testament spoke in the same way: “Thus says the Holy Spirit”

(Acts 21:11), and also when Paul wrote this to the Galatians about Him: “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles” (Gal. 1:15-16). In the Acts of the Apostles, it is similarly written: “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2). You see that the one whom the Father separated and called to the service of the Gospel is the same whom the Holy Spirit separated and called—not as a servant would, but personally, by His own power, as God, which shows that He is of the same essence, glory, and power, equal to the Father and the Son. Therefore, knowing this, when you hear our Savior say in the Gospel concerning the Holy Spirit: “He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:13-14), know that He spoke this in accordance with the Economy, condescending to the weakness of His hearers, who could not yet comprehend the revelation of the divinity of the Paraclete and the fact that there is one essence in three hypostases. For it was to be feared that, unable to rise to the height of these concepts, they might imagine the Trinity as three separate powers and glorify a plurality of powers rather than the unity of power. This is why, with sovereign wisdom, He used these words, saying: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth” (John 16:12-13). He showed that the Paraclete would be the teacher of the most perfect knowledge, but at the same time, He tempered and softened His speech due to the weakness of His hearers, saying: “He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:13-14). Then, seeing that these words might seem to diminish the divine dignity of the Spirit, He immediately reaffirmed it, elevating it high in the minds of the disciples and, after these words, introduced it, saying: “All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:15). “Do not think”, He says, “that if the Holy Spirit is to say all He hears, it is as if by teaching or revelation from one greater than Himself, and that He gives you knowledge as if of what He does not have, taking it from another. For just as I am begotten of My Father, and all that the Father has is Mine” (John 16:15), because, being of the same essence and speaking according to the Economy, I say of Myself that I take what is naturally Mine, so

also, being the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father (John 15:26) and has by essence what the Father has, He is said to take what is Mine. Now, what is Mine is nothing other than the Father. This is also why, when speaking to the Jews, He mixed these words of the Economy with those of theology, saying: “The Father who sent Me is greater than all” (John 10:29), and again: “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). Indeed, when they could not bear to hear His equality in honor and essence with the Father, they were about to stone Him, saying: “It is not for a good work that we stone You, but for blasphemy, because You, being a man, make Yourself God” (John 10:33).

Truly great is the teaching and proclamation of the Holy Trinity, and there is no one among men who could make it known except the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. This is also why, when He spoke to Moses, He said: “I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, the Lord, I was not known to them” (Ex. 6:3). But what is this name that was not revealed to them if not that of the uncreated Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? He indeed said: “I was not known to them.” What He did not make manifest and known, He showed as if by signs and images, as far as it was possible and as far as it was worthy to be prefigured and taught—this mystery which was to be revealed. This is also why our Savior said to the Jews: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day. He saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). See, I ask you, the profession and gradual elevation of the teaching: from the ancient polytheism and demon-worship of the Egyptians, He called the sons of Israel to recognize one and only God, and He wrote for them a law on tablets of stone. Because He spoke to them as to people who were as insensible as stones—or rather, as on stones written by God and inscribed by the finger of God (Ex. 31:18), as the divine book says—He turned them away from the gods of stone and insensibility. But when they were prepared for the knowledge of God by the sublime discipline of the law, it was then necessary that the divinity of the Only-Begotten Word be revealed. And He, the God-Word, becoming without change a rational man and dwelling among men (Bar. 3:38), advanced them, purifying our intellect weighed down by the passions of the flesh. According to the word of Paul: “So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin” (Rom. 7:25); “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1); and “They walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (2 Cor. 10:3), since

already by the coming of the Word in the flesh, we are such that we are raised to a rational and spiritual life and are capable of aiming at the things above (Col. 3:1). The Holy Spirit is revealed to us spiritually, without the need for the former veil of the flesh.

By tongues of fire, He rested upon the apostles, showing by the fire that He is the same in essence and glory as the one who descended in fire on Mount Sinai and inflamed the bush without burning it, and who initiated and instructed Moses. By the tongues, moreover, He showed that He is of the race of the divinity of the Son and the Word and not foreign. For the tongue and the word are closely related and express the movements of the intellect. When, therefore, the apostles received such grace, and the tongues rested upon them, they began to speak in different languages and to address the people of various nations who had come to Jerusalem. The Spirit thereby made known that the good news was to be preached to all nations alike. But when I reflect on this, I advance further with diligence, for through the miracle of the tongues, the boundless ocean of charity has been manifested to me. For He who came forth from God for our race abolished the ancient debt. And what was this debt? Let us hear the divine books say: The divine Moses wrote in the book of Creation thus: “The whole earth had one language and one speech. And as men migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city and the tower. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth” (Gen. 11:1-9).

This punishment and division of languages, the Holy Spirit abolished by appearing and manifesting Himself through tongues of fire. He abolished them in a manner

wholly divine and altogether wondrous and glorious: not by making the people of different nations hear the apostles speak one language, but, on the contrary, those who spoke used multiple languages as one, and those who listened condescended to be persuaded without dispute by the preaching of the Gospel. For if He had again made the language of all men one, the assent to the preaching would have seemed a matter of compulsion rather than persuasion. But while one faith was proclaimed through many and diverse languages, the free will of those who believed is demonstrated, while the confusion of languages of old is healed by the harmony of the proclamation. The wrestling with God of those ancient men caused the division of the one language of the whole earth, but the knowledge of God gathered the diverse languages into one faith and, like the strings of a lyre producing different sounds, prepared for the performance of one harmonious song, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah, who cries: "The Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day, there shall be one Lord, and His name one" (Zech. 14:9).

This is why I said at the beginning of the homily that every feast, so to speak, is the abolition of the sentences weighing upon our race. Such are the gifts and others like them that the manifest coming of the Paraclete brings us. And as we have been enriched by the coming in the flesh of God the Word, we have also merited a certain mystical coming of the Spirit—so to speak, spiritual and incorporeal—of Him who has again poured out His own gifts upon us like dew. Concerning these, Paul, enumerating them, said: "To one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:8-11). You see the richness of the superabundance of the gift most worthy of God and the power of this Spirit, who distributes by His own will, to each as He wills, the divine gifts. How, then, can you claim that the Spirit is not God and reduce to the level of creatures the Uncreated, the author of the serving and heavenly powers, and for us men, not only our Creator but also the giver of all wisdom and understanding? For David says: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. 33:6). And someone speaking as a philosopher in the book of Job says: "The Spirit of God has

made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4). God the Word, therefore, has manifested Himself among us who live on earth, humbling Himself, and without change becoming man, and He accomplished the Economy peacefully, according to the prophecy of Isaiah: "He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench" (Isa. 42:2-3; Matt. 12:20). Having thus dwelt among men (Bar. 3:38) as a man, He willingly endured the cross in the flesh for us, tasted alone the life-giving death, and raised us up with Him (Eph. 2:6), we who were dead, for He is the firstfruits of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20, 23).

In honor of this great deed and such aid, during these fifty days, we do not kneel on the ground in our prayers in any way, but standing upright, we stretch out our hands, praising Him who was crucified, buried, and risen. And against our enemies—the Slanderer and the demons—with David, we sing: "They have bowed down and fallen, but we have risen and stand upright" (Ps. 20:8). But as the Holy Spirit, in a manner worthy of God, has manifested Himself and appeared to us, and the divinity through the tongues of fire has illumined us and poured out the abundant riches of His spiritual gifts—"I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh" (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17), as before Him whose face we cannot endure and who astounds us by the greatness of the superabundance of His gifts—we bow down to the ground and bend our knees, glorifying the giver of such great gifts. Moreover, since we are purified by fasting and have straightened our spiritual life, it is customary for those who are worthy of divine visions to kneel on the ground and proclaim by this posture the sublimity and greatness of the vision. This is what the disciples experienced when the appearance of Jesus was transformed on the mountain and He showed a little of the radiance of His divinity: "They fell on their faces and were greatly afraid" (Matt. 17:6). Certainly, the tongues of fire troubled and astonished their minds, but they did not at all allow themselves to kneel on the ground, so that these tongues resting on each of them might be clearly seen. But we, in their place, do this: bending our knees, we tremble before the Majesty of the divine coming of the Spirit, adore and praise Him as Lord and God, and at the same time show that through the Spirit we have learned the perfect worship that begins with the Father and is completed in the Spirit, which has its end and is concluded in Him. For everything outside these three hypostases is not worthy of worship but is ordained for those who worship. For the proper attribute of the

uncreated and incorporeal divinity is to be worshiped in spirit and truth, because "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). This is also why this Holy Spirit is called the Paraclete (John 14:26), that is, the intercessor, because He dwells in our hearts, incites and urges us to what is best, and teaches us not only to worship but also to pray in the spirit. Hence Paul, writing to the Romans, says: "For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26). Let us not cease to practice this at all times, but let us show a pure life and, venerating these tongues of fire, turn our faces away from pagan defilements, blasphemy, insane and foolish words. Let the divine words burn and baptize our tongue; let us not defile it with mud by earthly words, but let it rejoice daily in heavenly things and praise the one God in the Holy Trinity, to whom be glory and power forever! Amen!

## HOMILY 26 WARNING ABOUT THE SPECTACLE OF HORSES, THE FIRST SPECTACLE THAT TOOK PLACE AFTER SPRING, SO THAT WE MAY FLEE HARMFUL ENTERTAINMENT AND THE EVILS THAT ARISE FROM IT, AND CONCERNING THE HOLY MARTYR THEODORE. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Just as a good father, seeing his son diligently applying himself to his studies and the craft he is learning, is pleased, rejoices in his heart, and is proud of his son's good nature, so too do I, seeing this Church and this holy assembly eager to hear divine words and—what follows from this—to know and learn the virtues, greatly rejoice within myself and give thanks to God, who supplements the deficiency of my tongue with your intelligent hearing. For in Jerusalem of old, when it abounded in spiritual virtues, as the prophet Isaiah says, there was a wise architect and an intelligent listener. That the wise architect is the teacher of divine doctrines, listen to the wise Paul who teaches: "For according to the grace of God given to me, like a wise architect, I laid the foundation." I will not speak of the wisdom of the visible Jerusalem, which bears the same name, since I am far from it, but I appear as an architect because of the richness of your wise hearing, and what you have in abundance makes up for what I lack. But I will especially praise your intelligence when I find that you make proper use of spiritual teachings, as befits the time of fulfillment, and of the aids that are preventive remedies to avoid harm or to achieve perfection. For a soldier is also worthy of praise when he is splendidly adorned with all his weapons, brandishing spears, knowing how to shoot arrows and overturn shields. But this praiseworthy practice is of no advantage if, on the battlefield, when the adversaries stand opposed, he shows nothing of what makes a warrior or a brave man, but instead flees and is captured, as it is said in the psalm: "The sons of Ephraim, who drew the bow, turned back in the day of battle."

Why have I said this? I will say it plainly and hide nothing. Since I set foot in this city until this day, I have found that you amass great spiritual wealth, confirm your well-deserved name of being called Christians first, and show in deed the apostolic ordinances proclaimed in words in the Church: that you love without partiality, hate evil, cling to the good, labor to show brotherly love, are fervent in spirit, serve the Lord, rejoice in hope, endure tribulation, celebrate all the feasts of Christ with faith, purity, and honor, and are reborn with the birth of Emmanuel in the flesh,

walking in newness of life. But when I see all this spiritual wealth in you, I fear that misfortune may befall you. Indeed, I have in mind the spectacle of horse races, the first to take place, and I am filled with anxiety and troubled in my thoughts. I greatly fear that the devil, the evil one, may lead some of you astray with fleeting amusement and make spectators of Satan's pomp those who have merited seeing the divine, invisible, and ineffable mysteries—which many prophets and righteous men desired to see but did not see, as the Lord truthfully says in the Gospels. And I weep and groan, wondering in my spirit whether the mouth that in church has offered mystical praises and invoked its Father in heaven has at the spectacle let slip demonic words. And how much do you think that word—which seems trivial but is cried out thoughtlessly by many: "Fortune of the city, grant victory!"—provokes God? Those who easily invent and worship beings that are not gods—an act among men that is unworthy, baseless, and worthless—have named this "Fortune," attributing it to a demon. By this, they nullify God's providence. For God's judgments governing the universe are hard to discern, and we do not know them, as it is written: "Your judgments are a great abyss," and elsewhere: "His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out. For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Or who has first given to Him, that it should be repaid? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen." But even what seems in worldly events to be chance and subject to change belongs to God's supreme wisdom, who rules the universe. For He teaches us to despise present things as baseless and not to cling to corruptible and temporary things but to look to the incorruptible and immortal future, and to the final judgment where the scales of justice and retribution are set, rendering to each according to what is just for what has happened here.

Why then, O blind one, do you call such wise governance of God "Fortune," and by your own authority personify it, setting up your opinion as a god over the city and attributing victory to it? Our God and Savior Jesus Christ cries out in the Gospels: "Take heart; I have overcome the world," and through the prophet Isaiah rebukes those sick with such vain notions, saying: "You who have forsaken and forgotten My holy mountain, who prepare a table for Fortune and fill cups for demons, I will deliver you to the sword, and you will all fall by slaughter." Do you see how praising Fortune sows polytheistic and idolatrous error? If God, who does not lie, has decreed in the sacred Book of the Gospels: "Are not two sparrows sold

for a penny? And not one of them falls to the ground without your Father," how can we say, according to the folly of these unwise sages, "Fortune is the mistress of existence"? If this one expression—though many may not find it condemnable—is found upon examination to be subject to condemnation, where shall we place the other words shouted by those who watch horse races? They cry loudly, their voices resounding through the air, throwing dust toward the sky or even stones, frothing at the mouth like madmen, imagining they run with the horses, handle the reins with the charioteer, strike with whips, shout about the race, and rejoice when the opponent's horses are exhausted—without hearing the sacred Books say: "The righteous man regards the life of his beasts," but instead quarreling and saying, "There is absolutely no sin in being entertained by such spectacles."

For my part, I will first omit saying that every spectacle, whatever it may be, is celebrated in honor of a demon, for the pagans abound in harmful wealth—that is, a multitude of false gods: one is a demon friend of horses, another of laughter, this one of war, that one of hunting. They honor these with processions and festivals, celebrating them impiously and behaving atheistically. But even if we grant that no demon-worship occurs in horse races and that it is merely the joy and amusement of the soul, do you think this pleases the God of the universe? He has commanded the donkey to bear a burden, the ox to pull the yoke, the plowman to break the furrow, and other beasts to serve the world's needs. He has given speed to the horse so that we may travel swiftly, convey useful news to those beyond borders, prevent harm, and march in battle array against advancing enemies, as the sacred Book says: "The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory is from the Lord." But it is not for us to misuse the animal for excessive racing, making it turn in circles, perish, or break its legs mercilessly—while you, if you lend your horse to someone and it is used for grinding or mining, you resent it and think yourself wronged. Do you think God does not resent it or grow angry when He sees you mercilessly misusing animals beyond necessity and His commands? "For the mercy of man is for his neighbor, but the mercy of the Lord is upon all flesh."

I omit saying that the expenses of this useless spectacle could fill the stomachs of many poor. "For whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin," as James has written. Let no one oppose me by saying, "Does God care about oxen?" For He cares even for them and for unreasoning nature. "He opens His

hand and fills every living thing with His blessing." But concerning what was said earlier, hear what the Apostle himself said: when speaking to the Corinthians about those who preach the Gospel living by the Gospel, he cited the Law: "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and added: "Does God care about oxen? Or does He say it altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crop." But this is what he means: God, he says, commanded "not to muzzle the ox," not because He cares for oxen, which can fill their bellies even without the threshing floor while still doing their work, but to elevate us to higher things and to thoughts concerning men, showing that it is just for the laborer to eat from his labor, as the commandment says: "The laborer deserves his wages." But even if we grant that rivalry over horses is free from sin, why do you not enjoy the spectacle in silence and seated with decency? Why make it a cause of strife and agitation? Why, swelling as if victorious over perfection because of the horses' speed, do you provoke and taunt with defiant words those who oppose you, so that when they can bear no more reproach, they turn to throwing stones, and from this audacity many murders result? How shall we not rightly call this the play of little children—and would that it were only that! For I cannot say whom I should mock more for their lack of sense: the one who provokes and irritates or the one who is needlessly angered and cursed over something worthless. They ought, as I judge, to praise the victors—the horses and charioteers—and blame the vanquished, not dividing by faction and enmity or making this a cause of tumult and public evils. But why try, as if I deceive myself, to bring order to disorder and subject unreason to reason? The shouts, riots, brawls, and disturbances there show that such spectacles are the work of demons. "For the tree is known by its fruit," as the Lord truly says. Let the spectators prove the opposite: let them enjoy this amusement in beautiful silence. I pray to be proven a liar in this for their salvation. For even if they escape harm in one or two spectacles, I am confident that most often they will come to strife and trouble.

So much for them. But you who are devoted to the Church, I warn and advise you not to defile your eyes with such spectacles nor sully your tongue with foul and unclean words—that tongue which you have sanctified with hymns and mystical prayers. Obey the holy Apostle who legislates: "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption," and teaches how we

may not grieve the Spirit, adding: “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.” It is impossible for one who watches horse races to be free of these. May He who delivered us from our snares, as the psalmist says, and redeemed us from sin after we were enslaved by the slanderer and fallen into the net of death by His blood that cleansed the world—may He today also call and gather us to celebrate the memory of the holy martyr Theodore, wishing to drown and wash away yesterday’s harm with today’s profit. For it is His custom to hide diseases under abundant healing and to compensate our sins with His forgiveness, lest we forget that what destroys us is what provokes Him.

For to what thought does the martyr Theodore not recall us? From what spectacle of Satan does he not turn us away? He draws our eyes to himself, for his spectacle is truly spiritual and heavenly, rejoicing and delighting the angelic choirs and their director, Christ Himself: the spectacle of a man, a soldier, standing amid judges, amid strikers, amid onlookers, unshaken and unafraid, confident and untroubled—a youth in age, with budding beard as black and thick as his hair, his face untouched by the razor due to his ascetic life, healthy and well-built, esteemed and renowned among military commanders, subduing his body with endurance, shining with purity of countenance, enrolled to fight barbarians, yet wrestling not with flesh and blood but with principalities, powers, and the rulers of darkness. Like a statue, he stood in the arena of martyrdom, torn by blows and tortures yet unyielding and unbroken. For out of regard for his courage, eagerness, and readiness to suffer for Christ, the flame of fire also showed kindness: taking the form of a round, cavelike hut, it enclosed his body, preserved it from destruction, and sent his soul to the heavenly spirits. From there, he joyfully intercedes for us with the God of the universe, being the free helper and messenger of our supplications and companion in life’s cares, casting a terrible and unbearable gaze upon demons, restraining the feet of fleeing servants and thieves, exposing nocturnal thieves and housebreakers, unveiling the guilty, and bringing them bound before him—perhaps because he gladly accepted his bonds as he advanced into the flame. These bonds he showed superfluous, binding himself with the voluntary bonds of patience, for to choose to suffer for Christ is an indissoluble bond, since it is voluntary. Nothing is stronger than a manly mind. Could yesterday’s spectacle so rejoice and delight us? Were you not nourished and charmed in your souls,

becoming better by mere hearing? What relation is there between fleshly delights and the deceptive spectacle of the eyes, and the soul's pleasure and spiritual contemplation? There is a great distance between them, as between moderation and madness in thought. Therefore, oppose immoderate laughter with the tears of repentance, laxity with zeal, gluttony with sufficient food that satisfies need, not excess, childish street songs—which one blushes to hear attentively—with church hymns, and in all things, a blameless conscience and hope that does not disappoint, which is near to faith, steadfastly awaited, and future. Let one consider whether anything is happier than appeasing God. Let us give thanks to Him for all things, for to Him belong praise, glory, and power, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 27 ON THE HOLY MARTYR LEONTIUS. TABLE OF CONTENTS

It is to all the martyrs that we must offer homage expressed in words, because they have subjected the carnal spirit to the sovereign and rational intelligence of the soul, and through patience in suffering, they have shown that the thought within us is not enslaved, is without a master, and does not yield to any constraint. But among these martyrs, it is especially Leontius whom we must honor, he who, through his own combat, has enhanced the glory of those who struggled before him in the fight; even now and, so to speak, at every hour, he bears clear witness through astonishing miracles and signs that Christ, his master, is the true God. Indeed, this courageous fighter, or rather his ashes, provides us with evident and authentic proofs of the resurrection, granting numerous wonders and healings of every kind to those who touch them, or rather, by sending, even to those far away who implore the martyr's intercession, like rays, the effects proper to him, through the grace of the Spirit deposited therein. For indeed, that martyrdom itself is the confirmation and foundation of the hope of the resurrection, the Book of Acts attests, speaking thus: "And with great power the Apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." But then, for the Apostles, it was still during their lifetime and while they breathed this air that they performed wonders and testified to the resurrection of Emmanuel, which is the first fruits of the resurrection we hope for. But for the flesh of Leontius, it is after being buried and returned to the earth from which it was taken, and even before rising again and before regaining its soul, that it performs great marvels; it no longer allows the flesh to have only hope remaining; for a hope that is seen is not hope; for what someone sees, why does he still hope for it? says the Apostle Paul. Thus, it is great for someone to suffer for Christ; and the more someone is overwhelmed by numerous and violent torments, the more he fills his own ship with goods that weigh more than (human) glory. And just as, concerning plants, one can see that the branches of fruit trees, which horticulturists introduce as grafted tips and place under the bark of a tree, cause the bud, which was once without fruit, to bear fruit, in the same way also, the stigmata of Christ produced by torments, once imprinted on the bodies of the martyrs, render the dried bones and dead and sterile ashes capable of producing fruits of wonders, miracles, and healings.

It is by such scars that Leontius, the martyr clothed in Christ, adorned his body, scars that will shine upon him on the day of the resurrection with even more brilliance than the stars. It is from them that he also brings forth for us all these fruits of healing—and similar ones!—by casting out demons, renewing wounded bodies, averting future misfortunes, revealing through visions and clear revelations what was unknown and hidden, predicting what must necessarily come to pass—and thereby showing himself to be a physician always available and free, not only for bodies but also for souls—by filling with a certain divine character those who enter the temple of his oratory, touching their spirits, and making them live in the splendor of heavenly love. And I know many among the young people of Berytus, lovers of laughter, students of Roman law, who went to find him to pray to him, and who suddenly cast off from their minds the scales of their worldly thoughts and concerns, and as if they had wiped or rid themselves of these (scales), they underwent a happy transformation and converted to a life of asceticism and monastic life; I myself am also one of them, I who was changed and seized by the miracles of the martyr. It is for this reason, as I have just said, that he is the physician of both bodies and souls, because, in truth, he was patient in all bodily torments, without being driven to the limit, and yet he regarded them all as of little importance, desiring with the impulse of his soul to receive the trial of even more torments than those, he who, in truth—as I have heard from one of those who grew old in Tripoli recounting these old (memories)—was not brought by force to the tribunal of the judge nor dragged violently, but came there of his own accord, as if voluntarily.

When he saw that the martyr Publius—who rests in his vicinity—was at that time being led to death, he attached himself to him, accompanied him, spoke to him fearlessly, having only instruction in view, and shortly after he fought with him, struggled with him, even surpassed him for the crowns, advanced eagerly to suffer, in the same way that those who love their flesh advance to avoid suffering; and in all things he was composed, firm, unshaken, justifying this divine word as if it had been said beforehand about him: “The righteous are bold as a lion.” And perhaps now, after him, it is better to say about those who are filled with ardor and hasten to a praiseworthy boldness: “The righteous are bold as Leontius.” Thus prepared and descending with such ardor into the stadium of martyrdom, it was not he who

was tested by the torments, but he himself who gave the torments their own trial, so that they themselves might be tested in him, because he laughed at all of them, unconquered by fear, and because he showed to those who then judged tyrannically that they needed other instruments of torture; as if those they had deserved the reproach of being vile and easily contemptible, he wove the crown of martyrdom, departing to his Master, all resplendent and exalted by the exploits of his courage. And immediately, on the spot, he won the first fruits of the crowns for his labors; and it is through many and varied healings that he appeared as savior and helper for the living, he who seemed to be dead; and he shone with the rays of spiritual gifts, and there was no need for an orator to recount and repeat his martyrdom to those who came after and to adorn with words and exalt his virtuous deeds; but it is he himself who, through his present wonders, writes his life anew each day, or rather, who provides occasion for many words for each of those who receive his help, and who surpasses all orators when they recount, not what they have heard from others, but what they themselves have experienced with joy. Such is the physician, indeed, whom God truly had to raise up and display publicly for those who lived by the sea and in Phoenicia near Lebanon, so that through magnificent healings and miracles he might halt the race toward pagan error and the worship of demons and draw all to himself.

Many indeed were those who, running then to the Zeus of Baalbek to receive a false oracle, or already on their way back, having seen, even without understanding, the martyr's wonders, having received divine revelations and thereby known the truth, after long mocking the falsity of the oracle, left behind the demon of their fathers. And many who wished to devote themselves to lawful unions but went to the Lebanese Aphrodite, friend of evil desires, to celebrate an impure feast, and not the mystical one, and to inaugurate a chaste union with debauchery, having merited the martyr's attentive protection and a fearful nocturnal vision, and having been struck by the doctrinal rod of purity, after forgetting the follies of love, chose instead for themselves incorruptibility and passed to the great mystery of piety. And now the Zeus of the inhabitants of Baalbek has become mute and speechless, and he is deprived of visitors, deceiving only the inhabitants of Baalbek, because they will it so; and Aphrodite, the goddess of fornication and prostitution, laments with tears the chastity that has taken and exercised dominion over the universe, and, like debauched adulterous women who

stand in a brothel, she groans over her idleness and inaction. And it is to Leontius that all the earth and sea send fighters and disciples of piety as to a teacher of virtue, as well as those who wish to pray and show eagerness to render God propitious, as to the ambassador who has much power and enjoys great freedom with Christ; and all, obtaining what they ask, return to their country with joy and enthusiasm.

For my part, I marvel at how the martyr adapts to each one: to those who are perfect and have a word of wisdom, as the Apostle says, how he appears to them in a perfect, reasonable, and wise manner, and makes known to them what is fitting; and to those who have a word of knowledge, in a learned way, as one who reveals ineffable and hidden things; and to those who are average, in an average way; and to those with imperfect dispositions, he condescends and amuses himself with wonders, as with very small children. Thus, one of the villagers who lived nearby, according to the ancient pagan custom, had promised to offer a rooster to the martyr and was on his way to his oratory when a soldier met him on the road: the latter took his rooster; and it was weeping and groaning that he went to this holy temple, to complain to him of this theft. Then, being inside, he lamented and recounted this violence. Before he had finished his words, the martyr punished the greedy belly of this soldier. For after slaughtering this rooster and putting it in a pot, after lighting a fire and stoking it strongly, believing that the beloved and sought-after dish was cooked, and having set the table, he found that the meat of this rooster had hardened and become like stone; and indeed, it could not even be broken by hand, much less cut with teeth. For how could what was hard as stone? Yet immediately the thief of the rooster became the herald of this wonder, and it was to him that the tears of this villager passed. For after falling on his face on the temple floor, he sighed bitterly, confessed his sin, and asked for forgiveness. Seeing this, the one who had suffered injustice stood rejoicing that the martyr had accepted the iniquity and injustice he himself had endured, in place of a victim and any offering. Another, who belonged to the same villager class, having made a vow, had promised the divine Leontius the first offspring of his cow. When the time of birth came and the little one was born, a temptation arose for the villager. For when he saw that the calf that was born had a good nature, was white in color and of fine appearance, that it leaped and frolicked on the green grass of the fields and ran with its mother, splendid and magnificent with its broad forehead and agile

neck, that its horns were beginning to pierce, and that, concerning the yoke that was to be placed on it, it boded well for its strength and natural aptitude, he was captivated by this sight, and, seized by passion for this animal, forgot his vow; and he already saw himself yoking the bull to a plow! But immediately, suddenly, a white veil spread like scales over the eye of the magnificent and cherished calf: it was a reminder to warn the villager. When he realized his sin, he dragged the ox to the martyr's temple; and as soon as he advanced before the gates and tied it to one of the columns, immediately its eye was cleansed: for the thick veil that was on its pupil began to liquefy and come out drop by drop with tears. And after the calf was freed from its bonds, it went to join the other oxen of the martyr. For he also possesses herds from various sources, and great wealth flows and comes from the wonders and healings that are performed there, because all the well-off compensate with many gifts and offerings the physician and author of wonders. From there, one can see, around the martyrium, the guesthouse for strangers, for the care of lepers and those with other diseases of all kinds, and all that is useful and good for them.

It is also good for us not to pass over in silence another trait. A poor man, pressed and harassed by an inflexible lender for a sum of six gold denarii, asked the martyr in his prayer to pay this debt for him. And kindly (the martyr) revealed to him at night, standing near him, to go to the city gate: as soon as he saw men of the country bringing jars of wine to the village, he was to pick up a small stone from the ground and break the last of the jars. When he awoke, he was perplexed, fearing that, besides the debt, he might also, due to the loss of wine that would occur, be accused and taken to prison. Yet he did as commanded. When the wine jar was broken, the wine spilled on the ground and revealed that a venomous reptile had been hidden in the jar beforehand. And he who bore this loss, which was thus full of profit and cause of salvation, according to the martyr's command, placed these six denarii in the hand that had picked up the stone and broken the jar.

I have not said this for any other reason than to show, as I said before, that it was through wonders concerning these minor matters that he brought near to him the pagans who lived around him and drew them away from the error of demons. For they gaped at these minor and visible things, like very small children, while they

made absolutely no account of the future and the invisible. That is why one of their philosophers said: “The Greeks are always children, and there is no old Greek.” That is why they mock us, who regard the cross of Christ as folly, because we parade the dead bones of martyrs, as they themselves say. And we, mocking their lack of understanding, even boast of what they themselves mock without reason and senselessly. And indeed, their life-giving action and the miracles performed through them, we proclaim and reveal them, and as true and sure pledges of the resurrection we hope for, we hold fast, correcting by the facts themselves the unbelief of these people. With this grace, the faithful companion of Christ and the valiant soldier Leontius came to us at Daphne, not to accuse Apollo, who was once honored there, and to show him a lying diviner—for he was accused by another, his soldier, I mean the holy martyr Babylas, after being struck by lightning and burning with his temple and idol—but to come to your aid, because he is above all the physician of souls. For I know that our fellow citizens often run to Daphne as to a place of pleasure and amusement; and because he wishes to prevent in advance the harm done there to souls, he has occupied in advance the very entrance as the gate of this place, where he has established this holy temple. For every passerby will enter and pray and come to remember the martyr’s sufferings, and will anoint himself with the holy oil from his venerable urn; and after thus dulling the desires of the flesh, it is with a chaste and honest thought that he will go to the entertainment, without going as far as fornication, nor toward shameful songs, nor obscene laughter. And when he has filled himself with food and drink in a moderate and sufficient manner and with (the prayer of) blessing, and has delighted rather spiritually, he will return home unharmed in body or soul. He will procure for you another great advantage, since it is at the very summit of the road to Daphne that the martyr’s temple stands. For many poor sit there permanently, and they will remain long and block your way and will not yield until they too have received some part of the “diataxis”, that is, the expense you are about to make. And what price would one give to first feed Christ, through the hungry, instead of sending everything to the ever-insatiable belly, whether filled or not? For I omit to say that, in doing this, the martyr’s grace will be granted to you very abundantly and widely, namely through signs and wonders and miracles; on the very day of yesterday, he began for us with his own wonders. For while, on the road, on the cart carrying a venerable portion of his bones that was brought here, many threw garments of all kinds, bread, rings, and necklaces, and presented small

children, asking that they receive their share of the blessing and holiness of the saint and that they touch him, one of the children, fallen to the ground, found himself under the wheels of this cart: everyone thought he was dead and that his bones had been scattered to Sheol, as the psalmist says. Yet, through the martyr's intercessions, while the wheels had passed over the child's two thighs—wheels that even sturdy and solid stones cannot bear—they did not even scratch the tender flesh of the child. Let us give thanks for this to Christ, the God of the universe, who has given us such a leader and master of the city, and likewise a guardian, a physician, and a helper in our supplications. To him be praise forever! Amen!

## HOMILY 28 ON THE DESCENT (OF SEVERUS) TO SELEUCIA ON THE DAY OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE APOSTLE THOMAS. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Friends and brothers, you think that it is a favor I am doing for you by descending to this city; but for me, such is not the disposition of my thought, for it is rather I who come to give thanks because I have come to satisfy a spiritual desire. Just as a man, hearing from those who recount ancient tales about someone, a once-famous army leader, that in such a place perhaps he gloriously erected a monument of victory and subdued his enemies with power and strength, is stirred and transported within himself, so that in thought he returns to that time, and in spirit represents and imagines the account: he believes he sees the famous hero himself struggling fiercely and terribly against his adversaries in the very clash of battle, not turning back in any way, but striking without mercy and moving his invincible right hand variously according to the circumstances, and he greatly desires to see the very place where this monument of victory stands. Similarly, I, reading the book of Acts and hearing the sacred Scriptures speak about the divine Paul and Barnabas: "These, then, when they were sent by the Holy Spirit, descended to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus", desired to see this city and this port, as the starting point of the course of these spiritual horses—I mean the apostles—who ran like birds across the whole earth and embraced its ends by the preaching of the Gospel. On this subject also, the prophet Habakkuk, in prophecy, cried out to the God of the universe: "And You made Your horses leap upon the sea, stirring up great waters". This was certainly said according to a plain and accessible meaning, but it is according to a lofty, sublime, and true meaning that he says this world is a sea, because of the waves of this unstable life, upon which the feet of the apostles walked, stirring up many waters—destroying the worldly, pleasure-loving, and scattered thoughts and drying them up with the teaching of self-control and chastity.

I proclaim, therefore, this port truly favored and holy, and with good reason: here the apostles bent their knees and their tongues prayed; here, after they boarded a ship and raised the masts, they inaugurated their pious ordinances and left for the place itself an imperishable blessing, if, according to the word of Paul, the gifts of God are without repentance. Therefore, we also believe that the Christ-loving

emperor will approve and give orders concerning the arrangement and dredging of this (port); for it pleases him to rebuild anew not only useful places but especially holy ones as well. And this (port) possesses both this utility and this (character) of holiness and glory, since not only does it supply the goods of commerce that enter it to the great and famous city of Antioch and to the inland region far from it, but also because in that time it welcomed and accompanied the apostles, and again when they returned, it gave in return beautiful cargoes of piety. And indeed, one can hear the book of Acts recount further about them in these terms: “And they descended to Attalia, and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had just accomplished”. Consequently, it is necessary, therefore, to glorify this city and to salute it, because at that time it gave us the donors of spiritual nourishment; and it is because of them that, having multiplied and become a great assembly, we have also been designated by the name of "first Christians." And it is necessary to regard those who sowed these seeds as the fruits of good plants. Moreover, even now, wishing to nourish us spiritually, this city has brought us down for the commemoration and feast of the holy apostle Thomas. For it is truly a feast to recall these words that Thomas himself, while doubting and not believing, spoke to the other apostles when they argued against him and wisely affirmed that they had seen our Lord after He had risen from the dead, that He had come to them and appeared to them: “Unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe”. O wise unbelief, which like a plow has dug up for us the treasure of the depth of orthodox dogmas and faith! For whether it was at the moment when the apostle himself was moved by the Holy Spirit that he brought forth and uttered for us these expressions that demand much reflection, that require and deserve praise, it is easy to learn here. Indeed, when Israel in the desert was thirsty and asked for water to drink, Moses struck the dry rock with a rod, as God had told him. However, as he hesitated, he said: “Listen to me, rebels: Shall we bring water for you out of this rock?” And he angered God because of this, and he heard, along with Aaron his brother, these words of threat: “Because you did not believe Me, to sanctify Me before the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them”. For after a divine command, one must not hesitate but believe that what has been commanded will come to pass in any case. But when Thomas opportunely and praiseworthily doubted and did not believe concerning Christ, it was for the

instruction and confirmation of those who were to believe in Him for eternal life, as Paul says, that he heard this gentle Lord and patient God say: “Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing”. He could not better show that the unbelief of the disciple had been very useful and very just, unless by saying these (words): “Do not be unbelieving, but believing”. "Your unbelief," He says, "has been the mother of faith. Therefore, leaving the one, pass to the other. For I remember My promises, by which I said: “Knock, and it will be opened to you”. You have knocked insistently; but I have opened to you more generously, truly fulfilling what you have asked. Put your finger here, and see My hands, and recall the hand of Adam, which the commandment of God did not restrain from taking the forbidden fruit of the tree, and because of which I delivered My hands to be pierced by the nails. And put your hand and place it in My side, and in thought run to Eve, who was taken from the side of man, who made man share in the deceit of the serpent, because of which I was wounded in My side by the soldier’s spear—and not unconsciously, but after a voluntary death, to show clearly that the death which first operated in the side (of Adam), I blunted even before the resurrection, when from My side, which was dead, as if it were still alive, I made a saving spring of water and blood flow forth, and made the beginning of death the beginning of the mysteries of immortality."

If, therefore, it is for these reasons that the Word of God was incarnate and became man without change, how would He not have shared the same essence as us, apart from sin, (us) whom He hastened to snatch from the snares of death? For this reason, indeed, He took on the seed of Abraham, and He was of the root of Jesse and David, from whose race was the holy Virgin from whom He was also born according to the flesh. And how does He not exclude from the true incarnation every phantom that belongs to a dream, this unbelieving and most believing touch of the apostle Thomas? For a phantom, that is, a body that is a shadow, is absolutely not capable of being touched. It is for this, then, that this disciple doubted and did not believe, so that he might be for me the author of a true faith, cutting short the possible unbelief that would make Him imaginary, and it is after having doubted and touched that he was thus useful and delivered us from this error. He was useful again, and freed us from another error, when he confessed as Lord and God the one who was touched, and cried out admirably: “My Lord and

my God!”—not confessing one thing as the Lord who is seen and another as the God who is hidden, according to the nonsense of those who divide our Savior and God Jesus Christ into the duality of natures that occurs after the union, but knowing Him as one and the same of two natures, namely of divinity and humanity, which are perfect according to their concept—who cannot be touched in that He is God and can be touched in that He became man for us without change and without confusion, and crying out with John the Theologian: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life”. And let no one think that by these two letters placed before these two names—”My Lord and my God!”—the idea of two natures and hypostases and persons slips in. For one can indeed find in many passages of the sacred Books such a manner of speaking, which, because of the unity of the person, is said of one and only God, for example where David in the Psalms says to the God of the universe: “Give heed to the voice of my supplication, my King and my God”; and: “I will extol You, God, my King”; and in another passage: “For You are God my Savior”; and in Daniel: “God the eternal, who knows what is hidden”; and again: “Lord, God great and wonderful”. And it would take too long to enumerate and review (passages) of this kind. Therefore, it is not with the intention of dividing this one and unique (being) into two that Thomas said this, but it is by using the customs of Scripture, and as inspired by the same Spirit, that he professed and confessed as Lord and God the one who was touched and known. And it is not only here that the apostle himself has been useful to us, when he doubted and did not believe concerning the Economy and the incarnation. But in another passage as well, when he was perplexed about the love of God, he was useful to us for theology. For as our Savior was speaking to the disciples in a very lofty manner, he (Thomas) sought and asked, saying: “Lord, we do not know where You are going; how can we know the way?” And Jesus said to him: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him”.

Now by these words He shows nothing other than His consubstantiality with the Father. For if the Son were not of the same essence as the Father, it would not be because the Son is understood and known that the Father would be understood and

known as in a living image, equal to Him and differing in nothing; for a creature is not the sign of an uncreated nature. Just as the perplexity and request of Thomas taught us this doctrine about God, so his unbelief and touch taught us the true incarnation and not a phantom. Honoring this (incarnation) as well, let us likewise touch, if it pleases Him, now also Christ, and not only His pierced hands and open side, but let us also examine His back, which He gave to blows, and His cheeks, which He turned to slaps. And let us question Him according to the prophecy of Zechariah: “What are these wounds between your arms? And He will say: Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends”. And He calls "house of friends" Israel and Jerusalem, where He suffered the saving passion, or rather all humankind and all the earth for which He suffered this saving passion.

But how shall we touch and honor Him who willingly was struck in a house of friends and for His house? How? If, when He is cast into the street and covered with wounds, we do not pass by, but share with Him (our) mercy and (our) charity: if, when He is lying (on the ground), we give Him our hand and raise Him up; if, when He is naked, we clothe Him. Indeed, it would be necessary, if it were truly possible, that we share with Him the very pain of His wounds and associate ourselves in part, as with Him who suffered first, with the blood He shed for us. And because this cannot be, let us not add to Him the misfortune of hunger and nakedness, nor aggravate the pain of His wounds, and let it not be said of us also, as He proclaimed beforehand through the prophet who sings: “They have added to the pain of my wounds”. For there are three reasons why we are bound to show mercy to those in this (state): First, because we must grieve with those of our race and have compassion for them because of (our) shared nature. Second, because of the uncertainty and obscurity of the future. For we do not know if in a short time we will (not) fall into the same situation and if we will (not) need others to help us. Third, because of the great and sublime honor granted to us by Him who said: “Truly, I say to you: As often as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me”. For how is it not shameful, if He, being sinless by nature, “was wounded for us, was sick because of our iniquities, and was finally led to death”, according to the word of Isaiah, that we do not grant some relief even to the wounds of those of our race, (we) who open thousands of wounds in our spirit, without noticing the spiritual rot and stench? Do not tell me, indeed, that you honor the divine side and the hands that were pierced for you, if you turn away from the

wounds of your brother; for you forget that by this you despise those wounds. You do the same as if, among the members of a single body, someone loved some, hated others, turned his face away from others, and loathed others. Shall I pass over in silence the very true word of John, by which he decreed without falsehood: “He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has never seen”? And what? Does not the very mouth of Truth cry out thus in the Gospels in these terms: “If you love Me, keep My commandments”? Let us not deceive ourselves, then! But let us touch the wounded limbs of our brothers as this holy and pure side, which poured out for us the drinks of immortality, and let us clearly see Christ Himself; and when we adore Him and glorify Him as befits God, let each of us say with the apostle Thomas: “My Lord and my God!” To Him be praise forever! Amen!

## HOMILY 29 WHICH SHOWS THAT ANATHEMATIZING THOSE GUILTY OF PREACHING A GOSPEL DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE WE HAVE RECEIVED LIBERATES THE CITY AND THE CHURCH, THAT IS, THE PEOPLE, FROM CURSE AND ANATHEMA. TABLE OF CONTENTS

There is nothing worse than the cruelty of the heretic. For the more one repels his varied attacks, the more he strives to resist, inventing words of shameless language, like those venomous serpents with many heads: if one head is cut off, they threaten again with another, bearing the same venom and death. This is why the prophet David, when singing of the difficulty of guarding one's tongue, exclaimed: "What shall be given to you, and what shall be added to you, O deceitful tongue?" And addressing the righteous who have deserved to be preserved from this evil, he said: "You will hide them in the secret of Your presence, away from the intrigues of men. You will shelter them in a tent, away from the strife of tongues." What, then, is this tent that preserves those who fear God from the strife of uncontrollable tongues, if not to do and say all things in God, as Paul also exhorted the Colossians, saying: "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him?"

Behold, those who have descended into the filthy mire of Nestorius and divide the one Lord and God Jesus Christ into a duality of natures after the union—though their impiety has been refuted by many proofs in persuasive writings and by the God-inspired teaching of those who introduce the mysteries of the Church—they laugh softly among themselves and, like slaves being whipped, murmur between their teeth, insisting: "It is very important that at all times we anathematize these bishops who have left the world, who have defined that the one Christ is known in two natures. Yet even the mere act of hearing the reading of an anathema is painful to endure, beyond any burden." And we say with terror: "Would to heaven that by such anathemas the city not be shaken and that these dark, deceitful, and treacherous things from foreign and deceitful men, who have crept in to spy on our freedom, as Paul says, not fall upon us!" Who will say to these people: "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why is there no healing for the daughter of my people?" It is indeed good in its time to use the words of the

prophet Jeremiah and say: “Do we lack the remedies of the divine book that can heal their sickness? For these things were spoken by the Divine Spirit for no other reason than that, for each of their sufferings and diseases, we might find the appropriate remedy.” Likewise, perhaps, the apostle Paul, when writing to the Romans, said: “Whatever was written beforehand was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope.”

Indeed, I beg you, turn for help to the story of Joshua, son of Nun, that invincible leader of the battle lines of the Lord, and you will see clearly that failing to anathematize those who were accused and guilty made the city itself liable to anathema. But delivering the guilty to punishment freed the citizens from all curse. For this great leader, wise guide of the people, heir and holder of the authority of the great Moses, when he was about to fight against Jericho, a city of a foreign tribe, had given this order to the soldiers, saying: “Shout, for the Lord has given you the city. Let this city be devoted to destruction, for all that is in it belongs to the Lord of hosts, the Lord Sabaoth. And you, beware of the ban, lest you take anything from what is devoted to destruction, lest you make the camp of the children of Israel accursed and be destroyed.” Such were the orders he gave, and the walls collapsed of their own accord at the shouts of the people, as if destroyed by weapons of war. The city was crushed and delivered into the hands of its besiegers. But a soldier of the children of Israel, Achan, son of Carmi, was seduced by the beauty of a necklace, succumbed to the temptation of theft, and sinned. The sin was imputed to the entire people. Then, when they rose to attack Ai, another city of a foreign tribe, they suffered a harsh defeat. Joshua, son of Nun, afflicted by this, began to weep, tore his clothes, and poured dust on his head, as did the elders of Israel. He prostrated himself face to the ground before the Lord, asking to be taught the reason for the defeat of the people who had arrayed themselves for battle. And he heard God say clearly: “There is an anathema in your midst. You will not be able to stand against your enemies until you remove the anathema from among you.” When this friend of God heard these words, he began to search for the one who had committed this theft and sinned, who was the cause of the curse and anathema upon the people. When he found Achan, son of Carmi, who had dared such impiety, he transferred the curse imposed on the people and the anathema onto him, saying: “Why have you destroyed us? May the Lord destroy

you this day!" And all Israel stoned him, raised a great heap of stones over him, and the Lord turned from His burning anger.

You see that casting the guilty under curse and anathema turns away God's wrath from the people and the city. But the fact that those liable to anathema secretly hide among the people brings total destruction upon the whole community. This is why we denounce as anathema those who have decreed that the one Christ is known in two natures, delivering our city from curse and anathema, and we return the curse upon their heads. Did not that impious man you know, who imposed secrecy on everyone and who, unknown to us, had become anathema in your midst, hidden while filling the city with revolts and troubles—even burning the portico and important quarters of the city, with many murders shamelessly committed and streams of blood flowing freely—destroy this dogma? But when, like Achan, he was accused and arrested, while the impiety corrupting him was hidden secretly and cunningly within him, we rejected the duplicity and deceit. Before all and everyone, we exposed and uncovered him, ridiculed him, and by the decree of anathema condemned him along with his impious masters. Moreover, it was not only Achan who received punishment but also his wife, children, and all his accomplices who were guilty with him and shared in the theft. When they brought him forth publicly, they unmasked and anathematized him and his band, to instill fear and trembling in the spectators, so they would not fall into the same faults. They were stoned by the children of Israel. This is why, when a bishop comes here, by a word of anathema he casts a stone upon the whole horde of the impious and, delivering our Christ-loving city from ruin, says to each of the guilty, like Joshua, son of Nun: "Far from destroying us, may the Lord destroy you this day!" Excellent, then, and very fitting to our subject is the story of Achan, for it is an image of the impiety of their heresies. For what did this madman and wretch say when he was caught? That he had stolen, and he fell under anathema: "I saw among the spoils a beautiful cloak, a fine Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels. I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath."

Perhaps it is the same with the leaders of these impious heresies: plunderers of the sanctuary, thieves of the divine Book, which they have locked in their hands, though it was wrested from the Slanderer by the holy apostles and the teachers who

introduce the mysteries of the Church. They steal that beautiful, varied cloak—the splendid tunic of the Church, of which the prophet David speaks to the God of the Universe: “The queen stands at your right hand, clothed in gold and many colors.” This is what these insolent men strive to tear away and remove by their lying teaching. He very aptly called it the tunic of the Church—simple, varied, and beautiful—for it is simple and easy due to the simplicity and unchangeability of the truth; varied because of the diverse titles of virtues from which come beauty and propriety, in which there is no stain, wrinkle, or anything of the sort, as Paul says. But these defilers steal what pleases them, corrupting also the two hundred shekels—the two "sous" of silver—that is, the teaching of the tradition of the two testaments, old and new, which yields and brings forth tenfold: such is indeed the yield of tradition at the beginning. For we have heard in the Gospels about this heavenly seed and the word yielding a hundredfold, after thirty and sixty. We say the same of the silver and the bar of gold: it is the tongue of the apostles and prophets, as if kindled and bound by the Holy Spirit, from which come words spoken in the Spirit. It is written: “The tongue of the righteous is choice silver.” The test for silver and gold is the test of fire. And again: “The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace, purified seven times.” This tested bar of gold and pure silver, when heretics steal it like Achan and hide it in the ground like that wicked and lazy servant in the Gospel who hid his talent—not only in the ground but also in the tent, that is, with hypocrisy and deceit, under the outward appearance and pretense of piety, as the apostle says: “They have the appearance of godliness but deny its power”—and with a tongue of lead and falsehood, they falsify and adulterate the divine dogmas, becoming for all the people the cause of God’s wrath.

This is why, like stones, we hurl anathema at them, even if they are numerous in the end, so that a great heap of stones may accumulate upon them, preventing them from raising their heads like serpents or crawling out of their holes. For the divine Paul is not inferior to the angels when he says: “Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed!” And again, shortly after, he repeats the same words for our safeguard, saying, as we have said before: “If anyone preaches to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed!” What then does he say to me? Perhaps, indeed, he speaks vain things, and it seems excessive to you to

declare him twice accursed, in succession and on the same subject—or overly vigilant and zealous for our salvation, acting too much in observance of earthly things—he who also says absolutely: “If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed!” But what has risen above the angels, preaching to us a gospel different from the one we have received? Would to heaven! He had pity on the many who distort and adulterate the faith and the preaching of the Gospel. Do you not know that Israel numbered six hundred thousand foot soldiers when they crossed from Egypt to the promised land, and were called a holy people, a great nation, a royal priesthood? Yet when they transgressed God’s commandments, all fell dead in the wilderness, as it is written, until their corpses disappeared there. Only Joshua, son of Nun, and Caleb, son of Jephunneh, were to enter the land of their fathers and be deemed worthy of the promise. Do you not hear Moses—or rather Christ speaking through him—legislating and saying: “You shall not follow the majority in doing wrong, nor shall you side with the crowd to pervert justice?” Gregory the Theologian also pursues this idea when he says that in his time, when many bishops were gathered and the abominable heresy of Arius raged, they conspired deceitfully against the faith of the 318 and insidiously defined that the Son is like the Father, when they should have said He is consubstantial. Thus, by a single word, they opened the door to impiety. He called their assembly the council of Caiaphas, and rightly so, that we might also remember the words of the saint, which amount to this: “Let it be called either the tower of Chalanè, which divided the tongues (though would that those tongues had been divided, for they agree in evil), or the council of Caiaphas, by which Christ was condemned, or some other such name befitting that synod which overturned and confused everything, destroying the pious and ancient dogma that defends the Trinity, setting up a blockade and shaking the term ‘consubstantial’ with their machinations, thus opening the door to impiety through the very formulas.” He also says on the same subject: “In place of bishops expelled from their sees, others were pushed forward, required to subscribe to impiety as if nothing else were needed. The ink was ready, and the accuser near. So it was with many of those who remained unshaken: they did not yield in conscience but were led to sign, joining the impious in both respects, sharing not in the fire but at least in the smoke—something I have often lamented, seeing the flood of impiety then and the persecution now raised against right doctrine by the very stewards of the word. For truly, the shepherds have become foolish, as Scripture says, shaming the desirable portion—I mean the

Church, gathered with much sweat and blood, both before Christ and after, and by the great sufferings of God for us. Except for a very few, and among them those despised for their insignificance or who stood firm in virtue—who should have been left as seed and root for Israel, that it might sprout again and revive by the Spirit's watering—all became slaves of the times, differing only in suffering the same fate earlier or later, some as champions of impiety, others in second place, swayed by fear, enslaved by need, seduced by flattery, or deceived by ignorance—the mildest excuse, if any can suffice for those entrusted to lead the people. For just as lions and other beasts, men and women, old and young, do not react the same way, and there is no small difference by age and sex, so it is between rulers and ruled. Perhaps we may pardon the people for suffering this, often saved by not being examined too closely. But how shall we grant this to a teacher, who ought to correct others' ignorance, unless his title is a lie? How monstrous that while no one, however rustic or ignorant, may plead ignorance of Roman law, and no law excuses acts done in ignorance, the mystagogues of salvation may be ignorant of salvation's first principles, even if otherwise simple and shallow-minded! Let there be pardon for those who followed in ignorance! But what of those who, though claiming wisdom, were overcome by the powerful for the reasons I mentioned, playing long on piety's stage until the slightest test exposed them?" Note carefully how this theologian knew that among those who defined and subscribed, some championed impiety, while others were swayed by fear, enslaved by gain, seduced by flattery, or led by ignorance. Yet he called them all the council of Caiaphas, by which Christ was condemned, and the tower of Chalanè, which God's enemies built early in time, striving to reach heaven, for which they were condemned to confusion and division of tongues. Is not the council of Caiaphas, like those enemies who built the tower, worthy of anathema? They say we should separate those deserving pardon and not lump all together under one charge of guilt. But as for me, those who preach a gospel contrary to the one I received, I anathematize and turn my face from. Those to be pardoned are known to Him who holds the bounds of pardon and the scales of mercy. On the other hand, we call the council of the 318 and likewise that of the 150 honorable and holy, though the first included Eusebius of Caesarea, who fought for the Arian heresy, and the second, Diodore of Tarsus, Nestorius's teacher in impiety. These were anathematized, but the number of holy councils is not diminished, for such things were sternly condemned and proclaimed.

Regarding how sparing men against orders exposes the sparing to condemnation and wrath, hear the sacred books, in the passage from the third book of Kings: “A man among the sons of the prophets said to his companion, by the word of the Lord: "Strike me." But the man refused. So he said: "Because you have not obeyed the Lord, a lion will kill you." And a lion found and killed him. Then he found another and said: "Strike me." This man struck and wounded him.” Thus, the one who spared the prophet, against God’s will, was punished, while the one who struck without mercy, at God’s command, was justified and saved. I recount this because the prophet reproached the sparing of a man contrary to the law: when Ahab, king of Israel, captured Ben-Hadad, king of the Edomites, in war, he did not kill him but let him live, though he was God’s enemy. Then the prophet came, showing himself wounded and bruised, and said to Ahab, warning him visibly and audibly: “Thus says the Lord: Because you let the man devoted to destruction escape, your life shall be for his life, and your people for his people.” Knowing this, cling to the laws of the Lord, whether showing mercy or punishing blasphemy and evil. As for the follies of those two or three worthless women, spit on them and despise those sunk in sin and passions, who shamelessly speak to men and feast their eyes on males. To the brainless fools, God will grant cleansing from this new impudence and passion, saying: “There is no healing for the dead.” So for Arius, Eunomius, Apollinaris, the defiled Mani, and their followers, though many in the end, have pity, for they too are dead. Either the Lawgiver and Lover of mankind has abandoned them, or you will be guilty of great shame judging the dead, hypocrisy will sicken you, and you will spurn justice for bribes. Saying these and similar things once, be convinced of what pleases God, be freed from all curse and anathema, and, as it is written: “The Lord will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all you undertake. He will bless you in the land the Lord your God gives you. The Lord will establish you as a holy people, as He swore to your fathers, if you obey the Lord your God and walk in His ways. All peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord and fear you,” and they will say: “You are blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth, by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory forever.” Amen.

## HOMILY 30 ON SAINT SIMEON THE STYLITE. TABLE OF CONTENTS

What virtues could we praise if we did not praise those of Simeon the Just? But could we pass over such splendor in silence? Especially when the impious Theodoret sought not to magnify his praise but to appropriate the conduct of this man, as well as the sound understanding of the inspired books, so that the excellence of virtuous actions might seem to defend the abomination of Nestorius? For he who dared, in writing against the chapters of Saint Cyril, to contradict the sacred word of the Gospels and openly declare, "The Word did not become flesh," with the most insolent tongue, also overturned the reputation of the just. Indeed, Theodoret, this blasphemer, once the ridiculous council of those gathered at Chalcedon had ended, and he had broken the bond of the holy Churches and the harmony of peace, limping from the weakness of impure doctrines, went to the monastery of this saint, hoping to deceive this Sage in Our Lord. And after he began to chatter much and uphold his own impiety while standing before the pillar, (the saint) rebuked him with great humor and vigor. For he summoned a small child and asked him in whom he believed. Hearing the child's innocent voice declare, "In the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," he turned to Theodoret and said, "Like this child, I believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and I confess one God to be adored in the Holy Trinity. And I do not indulge in delirious ramblings, nor allow my mouth to be rallied to that council of which you speak." This is what can still be heard recounted today by those who led an ascetic life in this holy monastery and grew old there, having received the truth from his very voice. Yet this thrice-wretched man, even after hearing this (response), dared to claim that this venerable man had acquiesced to his will in writing, though he did not even know the letters of the alphabet. Such is the conduct of the adulterous woman, as the Proverb declares: when she has done her deeds, she washes and says, "I have done no wrong." This is precisely what these impudences amount to, so that he chose to write both his rule and this plan of perfect life only to lead the overly simple to conform to his impious thoughts. But praise is not beautiful in the mouth of a sinner, as a sage has said. For if Eusebius of Caesarea, also tainted by the disease of Arius, wrote the history of the glorious martyrs of Palestine, we do not therefore say that these athletes of the truth held the thoughts of Arius. Indeed, heretics have a strong tendency to adorn their own impiety with the beautiful actions of others, like unchaste women who strive to simulate, with makeup, a

beauty they do not possess. Thus, in the past, regarding Saint Anthony, the pioneer of monastic and ascetic life who shared their thoughts, the followers of Arius's folly sought to spread slanders; but they were rebuked by him, just as Theodoret was by Saint Simeon, even though he lived simply and with great frugality.

But for me, the time has now come to begin the praise of this (hero's) deeds: each one, for a complete eulogy, would require, by itself, a mouth and a tongue; or rather, to be more precise, it is its own mouth, revealing itself through the powerful voice of its actions. For who, among Greeks or Barbarians, has not heard of the life of this (man), so strange and so removed from men? He was from a village facing the East, situated partly within the borders of the Cilicians, which the people of that land call Sis. Charged by his parents to tend sheep, he himself, in his soul, grazed in the inner meadows of the Spirit. For he was neither like Joseph, who was envied by his brothers, nor like Moses, who married the daughter of Jethro, nor like David, who, instead of being a shepherd, became the bearer of the king's armor. But from childhood, he lived as a solitary: with one hand and his staff, he led the sheep, while with the other, he looked toward heaven and was guided by the slightest sign from God. Continually with Him in prayer, when he traversed the mountain peaks, gathering the flower and resin of the Styrax, he placed them on burning coals, honoring the Most High with the sweetness of the fragrance that rose from them. Thus, from his youth, he was simple in his ways and a friend of God. And if by chance he sometimes found respite from his shepherding duties and did not have to graze the sheep, it was certain that he would go to the church. There, he listened intelligently to the reading of the sacred books, his ear attuned to hearing, and he marveled greatly at how He who is above all, Lord of all that is and Creator, descended from His own height and spoke to men humbly and mercifully. And so, he was even more inflamed with love for Him, pierced in his heart by the inspired words of God, as if by heavenly arrows. Sometimes, after hearing the sacred Book of the Gospels say, "Blessed are those who mourn now, for they shall be comforted", he, a lover of trials, pursued this happiness and carefully sought what affliction corresponded to it. Guided by the thoughts of the Holy Spirit, he found that it called affliction the constant restraint and resistance against the laxity of worldly pleasures, as well as the monastic life, in accordance with the thought that the Ecclesiast expressed when he said that "it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting". And so, this man of God, having cut the

bonds of the earth, like Samson the Nazirite cutting the cords of the Philistines, flew to the desert and embraced this ascetic life.

First, after rushing into the temple of the holy martyrs, kneeling, pressing his face to the ground, pouring out abundant tears from his eyes to God, and begging that what was fitting be revealed to him, he fell into a pleasant sleep and entered a divine ecstasy, where he received a vision like this: he was digging, he thought, a deep foundation. After digging enough, he grew tired and rested from his labor. Then he heard someone say, "You must dig deeper." Again, he resumed digging. And when he rested once more after his work, the voice commanded him anew to be diligent. And when he obeyed the command a third and fourth time, finally, he heard that he need not dig deeper but should now build solidly and without danger.

The explanation of this vision was made clear by what followed. For if the saint had not first laid the works of asceticism deep and had not come to them through total Nazirite devotion, like the wise man of the Gospel who set the foundation of his house on the unshakable rock and not on sand, he would not have steadfastly endured, by climbing a pillar, the powerful waters of pleasures and the violent winds of wickedness. Then, this strong man, having received this divine vision, made use of masters who were very skilled in instructing the young and forming them in spiritual methods and habits—those, I say, who presided over and were appointed to guide those leading the common ascetic life, that is, those following the example of the assembly that, from the beginnings of the Gospel’s preaching, believed in Jesus and about which it is written in the Acts of the Apostles: “And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, and no one said that anything he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common”.

And he surpassed not only those of his age but also those experienced in ascetic life, to the point that he fasted for five consecutive days and regarded all those days as one, while the other monks, each day at sunset, partook of a meal or, at most, doubled the fast (of one day), not daring to extend it to a third day, to endure the trial of food deprivation and not interrupt continuous abstinence. And when he did this, he was restrained by those in charge, the elders, who said, "This is not fitting," and, "This is not in order," and, "This causes confusion in the dwelling of the

brothers, when one strives to conduct himself beyond the prescribed limits and does not think the same thing or observe the same rule, as the Apostle says." Moreover, this reckless one was threatened with the danger of pride and the resulting fall. But he bore all these (reproaches) bravely. For he was humble in character and free from pride. On the one hand, he was deterred by the admonitions of these leaders and accepted their rebukes as a sinner; on the other hand, he was inflamed with the love of God. And toward the sweetness of virtuous labors, he willingly took flight. For he had tasted that what he did was good, as Solomon wrote about the strong woman—or rather, about the soul that had reached the maturity of youth. Though the old ascetics and teachers of virtue knew this, outwardly, they reprimanded him and even tried to restrain him from excessive Nazirite devotion. But inwardly, they rejoiced with him in his fervor and progress in these virtues. For he was not proud but sought to hide and conceal with all his strength the practices of humility he devised. To this end, when he wished to courageously conquer the desires of the passions of the flesh so that they might no longer trouble him in the heat of youth, he obtained a sturdy rope made of palm—that is, from the bark of the tree. Once split and made into strips, it was tightly braided, for it was hard and difficult to weave, yet it was braided so that thorns seemed to protrude from its strands. He wore it inside his tunic, around his loins, careful to hide it from inspection, keeping his eyes only on the Lord, and wishing to uproot, through multiplied pain, the disturbance caused by passions.

He suffered so much from this belt that drops of blood, flowing from it, reddened the ground where he walked. One day, when he had come to assist with some necessity, one of the brothers with whom he shared the ascetic life saw this strange thing and asked its cause. He remained silent, as if he did not know, but his garment revealed it. Thus, on the one hand, he could not hide it; but on the other, he caused this man to search more attentively and diligently, even reaching inside his tunic while holding him with the other hand—imitating the Apostle Thomas, who, with an inquisitive love of God, touched the side of Life. Doing so, he found that the flesh on his loins was cut by this rope, and he discovered the wound of the courageous combat that this soldier of piety had valiantly waged against fornication. From then on, the head of the monastery inwardly admired this deed, but outwardly, he reproached the one who had acted thus, blaming this reckless, harsh, and daring man for his treatment of the flesh, thinking that after rebuking

him with words like "presumptuous rashness and cruelty" and other such reproaches, he would force him to return to thoughts of humility. But when he saw him face the rebukes of correction and humble his understanding even more, while through the labors of action he had stormed the heights of virtue—according to the saying, “The greater you become, the more you must humble yourself and find grace before the Lord”—he henceforth permitted him to devote himself, as he wished, to a life that was not common or mixed but entirely eremitic, since he was now capable of living even in this manner with prudence and steadfastness and of directing his zeal more vigorously toward the terrible combat against demons. Thus, when the valiant one left and was freed from the common life with brothers, which restrained and held back the swift flight of his spirit toward a mixed way of life, then, like an impetuous horse freed from the reins, he wholeheartedly embraced the most exhausting labors of Nazirite devotion and endurance. Finding a waterless cistern not deeply dug, he descended into it. And as he remained there without food, meditating day and night on the law of the Lord, he nourished himself with the service of psalmody and paid no heed to nature. But after five days had passed, the leaders of the ascetic community from which he had come, filled with regret, sent two brothers to explore and search the remote and deserted places of that mountain, hoping to find him there. For they thought he had withdrawn to the most desolate areas. When these envoys met shepherds who had seen the man, they used them as guides and aids in their search. After wandering here and there among the rocks, suddenly, by a divine sign—though they had not seen him before—they were led to the cistern and stood over it as if above a hidden mine of gold. And after much grumbling against the just one, calling him harsh, fierce, and other such names, they threw him a rope and commanded him to grasp it. With great difficulty, they persuaded him, pulled him up, and brought him out. For truly, slipping into that depth was easy, but climbing out was not, without help; most often, he would have needed the aid of others. Indeed, when he emerged at that moment, it was not at all as from a pit of misery, as it is written, but as if he had been forcibly pulled from a spring of living waters, he groaned and wept. For he was not thinking of a dark abode in the depths but of uninterrupted, unwavering, and luminous converse with God. And he was grieved to find himself again among the brothers.

When he had dwelt and lived with them for three years—in body only, for in abstinence from food, immateriality of life, and the winged thought of his soul, he surpassed all those on earth, imitating the heavenly and incorporeal powers—he went to Telneshin, a village so named. And seeing, under the mountain peaks near which the inhabitants of this village lived, a hut made for asceticism, his soul was pierced; he desired and loved it as a dwelling, this great lover of trials. For three years, he also lived there, striving to ascend through higher degrees of food deprivation toward the fast of Moses and Elijah. For he believed that He who had given them such great rectitude, before the grace He gave to men when He appeared in the flesh, would grant him the same power if he brought the same ardor—especially since, by His fasting in the desert, He who was incarnate for us had softened and made it easy for us, though He could have surpassed even the forty days, being God and Master of nature. But He did not wish to exceed the measure of Moses and Elijah, so that the tempter might approach Him as an accessible man, without fleeing the foreign condition and inaccessibility of divinity. And when the tempter assailed Him, he was defeated and cast out. From that moment, his bonds were cut, and he is vanquished in combat by those who believe in Christ. Thinking on these things, Simeon, this pious and just man, approached the stadium of the forty-day fast, having commanded that the door of the hut be closed from the outside and having placed beforehand on the table for himself the necessities of water and bread. By this, he also showed the humility of his thought and, through his actions, that he was ready, on the one hand, as a man, to be overcome by the necessities of nature—hunger and thirst—and, on the other, when God willed it, to overcome these trials by the power of faith, so that, like Paul, he might also say, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”. And there was a minister and servant of this beautiful fervor, Bassus, who at that time, according to ecclesiastical law, traveled through those regions, visiting churches, and was also the abbot of a community of two hundred ascetics. These men held so firmly to monastic poverty and death to the world that they did not even bother to bake bread within the gates of their monastery. They had neither mill nor beast of burden and did not even cross the threshold of their dwelling’s door but waited for food from those who, by faith, know how to feed Christ when He is hungry and visit Him when He is imprisoned. Thus, this admirable Bassus, after the cycle of forty days, opened the door of the hut and found, on the one hand, the bread intact and undiminished—not one of the ten loaves was missing—

and, on the other, the jug of water was full. But the combatant, the mighty one, after such a fast and this repeated battle against demons—which had been exhausting and prolonged, for against the highest acts of courage, these jealous spirits wage a fiercer battle and rise more brutally—he found him lying on the ground without breath, yet fervent in spirit. His limbs were paralyzed, but his mind was courageous and strong with energetic thought. Taking some edible roots, he ordered him to peel them a little, bite them with his teeth, and swallow them, having first comforted the athlete with the communion of the divine mysteries. And when he was thus healed and his breath revived, he repeatedly undertook this forced and exhausting fast, in continuous meditation—natural, not forced—when the desire for food, like a traveler long absent, returned to nature after forty days. But while he remained without food, he was also without sleep, his mind filled with divine light, unweary in the battle against demons.

It was from this time that his station on an ascetic pillar began. For just as a manly and courageous warrior, when strong and hard-to-defeat enemies come against him, meets them in combat and presses them hard—and when he has struck them and put them to flight, not content with their fall, pursues them even in their retreat, striking mercilessly with his sword and reaping the heads of his enemies like ears of grain, giving no rest to his untiring right hand until he drives those who came against him back to their tents or makes them flee to their cities, and afflicts them anew with battle—so it seems to me that Simeon the Just, having vanquished the diverse assaults of hostile demons, overthrown them, and put them to flight in the manly and courageous combats of patience, wished, in an overflow of ardor, to meet them even in the air and show them fleeing from on high through the celebration of psalms in the heights and immaterial life. For on the pillar, he did not cease his continuous and complete forty-day fast. This, for thirty uninterrupted years, stunned and terrified the demons, for he could no longer, as on earth, sit or lie down, while the natural energy of his body was weakened and annihilated, the prolonged fast and food deprivation increasing further, and he remained standing continually. At first, he had a tree grow beside the pillar, which had, so to speak, sprouted with it at the same time and been created simultaneously, then rose and even surpassed the pillar’s summit, so that he could lean on it when bent by fasting, to avoid falling or needing the support of ropes. But in the end, no longer needing this aid, this violent one of the kingdom of heaven, delighting in the

overflowing and rich grace from above, cherished it greatly, as it is written, and received it all the more, crying out with Paul: “The love of Christ constrains us, because we judge that if one died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and rose again”. In this thought, he would have gladly died many times for Christ. Therefore, one of his feet, unable to endure the trial, first swelled; then the swelling turned into a tumor that burst, releasing a foul pus and a multitude of worms. He felt no such pain but, fixing his mind on the words of the Lord—”He who endures to the end shall be saved”, and “By your patience you will possess your souls”—he refused the art of healing or the comfort of other human remedies, persisting in trials, enduring for nine full months these sharp and gnawing pains and the bites of unrelievable worms.

On the one hand, men could not approach him because of the stench of this ulcer; on the other, the intelligent and immaterial spirits, the angels, came to him and conversed with him. He was thus the mustard seed, to which the kingdom of heaven is compared—the smallest of all seeds among vegetables, yet when grown, it rises to the height of a tree with thick branches, so that the birds of the air may dwell in them. But when he was freed from this ulcer, having been tested by its pains, then—even more than before—the entire seacoast and surrounding land sent to him the sick and those suffering from various ailments, so that even those who limped on both feet walked normally again, those struck in their ears or pupils, and whose tongues were tied, regained the use of their senses suddenly and without hindrance, merely by approaching him. As for demons, he cast them out of those they tormented as easily as one might shoo away flies.

Moreover, he also halted punishments and plagues naturally sent by God—whether droughts suspended over men’s heads: as soon as he prayed, heavy rains came, and he made them cease; or famines, a calamity: he turned them into abundant harvests, after the clouds saturated the earth with overflowing and copious streams, not just drops; or epidemics of plague: they transformed into a stable renewal of health; or tidal waves of the ocean and plagues afflicting entire peoples, like the scourge of lice and the devouring army of locusts: prayer, bathed in trial-loving tears, stopped and ended them.

And the just one also foretold these things when they were about to happen, having been enriched with the gift of prophecy: warning those preparing to sail to avert the impending wrath by grace. When a land that then belonged to us saw a multitude of rats emerge in most of its fields, to the point that they devoured even the grazing sheep—as we hear recounted in the divine book about the land of the Ashdodites, which was agitated and brought forth a similar kind of reptiles—the just one halted the rise and spread of this plague, commanding the villagers who lived there to plant three crosses around the land and to establish a vigil of choirs for the service of psalmody and prayer.

For it was through such exercises as he himself endured that he exhorted all to appease God, using frequent instructions daily from the ninth hour until evening prayers, always recalling the unquenchable fire and eternal punishment, and naturally deserving to be believed, because he was seen to practice what he taught—with this astounding station and dwelling on a stone, ever higher and more painful, this life without food, and this immaterial way of life—according to the prophecy of Isaiah: “Who will declare to us that the fire burns? Who will declare to us the eternal place?—He who walks in righteousness, speaks uprightly, hates iniquity and unrighteousness, and keeps his hands from bribes, stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil. He will dwell in the lofty cavern of the sturdy rock. Bread will be given him, and his water will be sure”. For it was by divine economy, and not by any other indication, that this aerial station on the pillar and this life impracticable to those bound by the flesh existed, leading many barbarians—worshippers of demons and animals—to the truth, though they would never easily come to pray to saints hidden in mountains or concealed in the earth’s holes. But toward this unusual, lofty, and aerial spectacle, and the renunciation of Simeon the Just, they came of their own accord, leaving their own customs and lands for this reason and setting out.

And just as at the birth in the flesh of our Savior, the Magi, gaping at astronomy, were led to the knowledge of God by a star unexpected in its appearance, so too the Persians, who worshipped the sun and moon, and the Arabs, who for the glory of Aphrodite adored the appearance of the evening star, the brightest of all stars—the just Simeon turned them away from the error of their fathers. When he made himself visible in the open sky and sent forth the rays of his miracles and his

angelic and incorporeal life, he enlightened those he drew near, who sat in the darkness of ignorance. Thus, even the king of the Persians marveled, so that he came to believe, as did his own wife, who asked that blessed oil be brought to her from the Saint as a healing remedy against evils. And to the Magi, ministers of fire, he gave the experience of his own grace and power, so that they proclaimed him great and confessed that he was more than a man. Even one of them, named Mazreban, was overcome by the beauty of a Persian girl who was a Christian. Since she was unmarried, he was convinced he could marry her. He asked her parents to give her to him in marriage. But she, having traced the sign of the cross on her forehead, refused and called union with a demon-worshipper defilement. But he, burning with mad passion, came with an armed band, seized the girl, and took her away by force. And when he saw that she preferred to be cut to pieces rather than unite with him unlawfully in bed, after inflicting unhealable wounds on her, he delivered her to prison and subjected her to the trial of torture instruments. Finally, he commanded his servants to tie a very large stone around her neck and throw her into the waters where the Tigris meets the Euphrates, at the height of the flood. But when this servant of Christ saw the imminent danger, she lifted her eyes to heaven and, in her mind, signed her face (since her hands were bound), moved her lips, and said only these words: "God of the just Simeon, arise and stretch out Your hand to me in this hour of anguish, for it is because of faith in You that I suffer." When she had said this, they threw her into the waters. But Simeon received her, as the whale did Jonah. Holding her in his hand, he set her on dry land, having severed the rope of the stone. Did the Saint himself, like a bird, traverse the air to perform this marvelous deed, as it is written of the prophet Habakkuk, who stood by Daniel’s side? Or did one of the angelic powers, taking the form of Simeon, snatch the girl from this danger? The God of wonders knows better than anyone. What more can be said? Unexpectedly, the girl found herself with her parents, and they, struck with astonishment at the apparition, out of natural love, leaped up and threw their arms around her neck. They embraced her, wept, and, hearing her recount how she had been saved, praised Christ who had saved her and who also punished the man consumed by passion, the atheist and murderer of the girl, for his cruelty. For as he was feasting and sitting at table, a fearsome man rose against him, holding a sword in his right hand, and struck him directly on the head. His servant withered to the nails on the right side of his body, and he confessed his recklessness, saying that the avenger of this recklessness was the

God of the Nazarenes. And before the Persians was placed the fearsome vision along with its teaching, so that no one would lay a tyrannical hand on Christians. This is what the girl's parents recounted when they came to the Saint's enclosure. Now that you have heard this, all you most honorable women, love chastity! And may mothers raise their daughters thus, and may daughters guard the Christian upbringing of their parents and their virginity.

But perhaps someone will say that the Perses revered Simeon thus and were transported with admiration by their experience of him and his renown, but that for the Arabs, it was not so. Not at all! For them, he was even more powerful and thus revered all the more. Their queen, being barren, sent a delegation of notables to the Saint to ask that she might bear a son. And when she did, she brought the fruit of her childbearing to the enclosure, which was inaccessible to women. Standing outside the gate, she raised her voice to the elder on the pillar, crying, "It is the rain of your holy prayers, O Father, and not my womb, that has made this ear of grain sprout for me: receive the firstfruits of the barren field." And the elder, laughing joyfully at the faith of the one who cried out, let fall a tear that mingled with his laughter, blessed the child and the one who bore him, and sent her away rejoicing. Yet we must also affirm that one of these barbarians—a chief subject to the Persians—seeing the sons of his nation winding in columns like ants toward the Saint's enclosure, established a law decreeing death as punishment for anyone who went to Simeon, fearing that under the pretext of the Christian religion, they might defect to the Roman principality. But in the quiet hour of night, in the depth of darkness, a power rose against him, lashed his back with blows, and threatened him with death if he did not repeal this law preventing God's servants from going to Simeon. And early in the morning, before dawn, he persuaded those under his jurisdiction to go to the Saint's enclosure whenever they wished, announcing that his own law had been abrogated by a better law and that, with its repeal, he had also commanded the building of churches and the fearless establishment therein of a bishop, priests, and other spiritual offices.

Moreover, this race to the pillar did not escape the Armenians or the Iberians either, but the fame and splendor of his miracles drew them too. Indeed, it became known when he appeared even to those afflicted by storms in the depths of the sea. The sailors, forgetting their ships and rudders, came barefoot to the mountain, more

adept at swimming than walking, to see the one who had delivered them from danger. And when they lifted their eyes to the pillar and scrutinized it, they understood that this was the one who had appeared to them in the tempests. After receiving his blessing, they returned to their port and ship, having obtained good and safe voyages through his prayers. But why should I strive to measure the immeasurable sea with a small eggshell or enumerate in words the exploits of this man? Have I not, even in my effort to honor the just one with praise, exceeded due measure? Yet, wishing to profit myself and please you, I have recalled three or four of his miracles and wonders, like those who bring back a few bouquets of anemones from a meadow abounding in many and varied flowers of every kind. For just as, by rising through the sweat of his labors and the height of the pillar, this (hero) let no one surpass him—though many strove to imitate his state as in an image, and not without peril—so too he overcame and dominated the vigor of reproachful words. Nor would he have attained such a sublime life without harm, had he not been rich in a humble character and balanced spirit, for he thought of Him who humbled Himself for us, who also came to his aid on the pillar, so that he might go to these combats and not relax before completing these labors, even after reaching extreme old age. And his body, which took no food and was thus almost incorporeal, when our fellow citizens received it, they placed it in this edifice. And when it was brought and stood before the city gates, a demoniac wandering in the cemetery was freed from his suffering and delivered. This was the beginning of the healings he made known to the faithful here, through Christ Jesus Our Lord, to whom be glory, honor, and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 31 ON THE DEDICATION OF THE HOLY CROSS AND ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE EARTHQUAKE THAT OCCURRED.

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If, for the temple of Jerusalem—the one built by the wise Solomon and prefigured by the Holy Spirit speaking through the prophet David—the ancients celebrated the feast of its first dedication, as recounted in the book of Chronicles, how much more rightly should we not celebrate this feast in honor of the venerable Cross of our God and Savior Jesus Christ? It is through Him that every temple is consecrated, every sacrifice and spiritual mystery accomplished—or, to speak more divinely, through Him we ourselves have become temples of God. For we know, according to Paul, that through baptism, our old self was crucified with Christ, so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be enslaved to sin, our earthly members mortified, and that it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us. Therefore, a spiritual commemoration is made, as if it were truly the Cross itself. Thus, it is supremely fitting to call this feast a renewal, fulfilling the words: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, all things have become new.” So, it is not as if the venerable memory of the Cross has grown old in us that we are renewed by it today—for it is a mystery that is continually renewed and does not age. Rather, we set it forth and present it to you as the beginning of a new life, so that you may come to this commemoration to which it lovingly calls us. Turning away from all the old leaven of malice, may you conduct yourselves in an evangelical and new manner, preparing for the coming restoration—a restoration that occurs at all times, renewing itself without growing old. Today’s renewal is that of our souls, not of the Cross itself. But we speak to you of the Cross because we attribute to it the cause of our renewal. To speak of it is also to celebrate our renewal, for it has been granted to us through the Cross.

When I speak of the Cross, I speak of the tree—both the first and the new. The first, in the divine book’s prophecy spoken of it from the beginning; the new, in the revelation at the end of time of the knowledge of God, which the Sun of Justice has made to shine in us. This Sun became incarnate for us without change and was crucified in His flesh. This is the tree planted in the midst of Paradise, which Adam could not taste without harm, for his spirit was not yet trained or applied to the

cultivation and contemplation of the other plants he was permitted to eat. In due time, we have tasted of this tree, but first we were educated by the Law and the Prophets and by the natural contemplation of visible creatures. These are the spiritual plants of Paradise, bearing fruit that is edible and harmless for the simple. We clearly know that this is the tree for knowing good and evil. When the Cross shines upon us with the teaching of evangelical preaching, we have, on the one hand, run toward the good—a profession of faith without error and faith in the Holy Trinity—and, on the other, we have fled and turned our backs on evil: the slavery of the Slanderer and the error of demon worship and the adoration of creatures. Only the knowledge of the Cross has discerned good from evil and prevented their confusion—something neither the Law nor the teachings of the Prophets could do. For we know from Scripture that those who worshiped the universal God also worshiped Baal and were mad with the intoxication of polytheism. The knowledge of the tree of good and evil—which was to know who is God and reject those who are not gods—was also the knowledge of the serpent's seductive words, which he presented to Eve, advising her to eat from the forbidden tree, unsuitable for her at that time. For what did he say to her? "You will certainly not die, for God knows that on the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil." You see, in this mention of "gods" in the plural, the serpent revealed the abyss of polytheism, born from the taste of lawlessness and untimely action. Because Adam tasted the fruit prematurely, he was defeated, subjected to the power of the Evil One, and transmitted this bondage to his children—those who fell into idolatry, even if he himself escaped its oppression, being newly established and having recently heard the divine warnings. For approaching theology, which contains the taste of the tree, without first being instructed by the contemplation of created things, is imprudence. Solid food belongs to the perfect, as Paul said, to those who, by habit, have their senses trained to discern good and evil. But as for us, after being first instructed not by dwelling in Paradise or cultivating certain plants, but by the Law and the Prophets, Emmanuel, the wise physician and teacher of our souls, granted us in due time to taste the tree—that is, when we knew that He Himself is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now, we hold fast to the good and spit out the evil, rejecting it and striving not only for the knowledge of God but for all virtue. Moreover, this is to know God as He ought to be known—a knowledge containing all good. The same tree has also become for us the tree of life.

For in Paradise, there were two trees surpassing all others, as Scripture recounts: "And the Lord God made to spring up from the ground every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Adam was temporarily forbidden to taste from one of these trees, while the other—the tree of life—he was to hold in reverence, observing the command without yielding to untimely desire. These two trees prefigured the venerable Cross, and in due time, we have tasted from it the knowledge of discerning good from evil. But through the Resurrection, He sends us to the delights of eternal life, as Isaiah, the trumpet of the prophets, proclaimed in advance concerning those who would believe in Christ: "For the days of My people shall be like the days of the tree of life." For when Adam fell into corruption by transgressing the command and was condemned to death, the universal God said: "Now, lest he reach out his hand, take also of the tree of life, eat, and live forever"—so that these elements of corruption would not remain immortal and endless. But for us, who have put off the old self, corrupted by deceitful desires, and have been renewed through the bath of regeneration and the Spirit, and have thus tasted the knowledge of the tree, He rightly says: "For the days of My people shall be like the days of the tree of life"—so that these elements of spiritual restoration and eternal youth may retain their reality and immutability. After Adam's transgression, God placed a cherub and a flaming, whirling sword to guard the way to the tree of life. The cherub teaches us that the tree of the Cross is the tree of God, for only before God do the cherubim stand and offer ineffable praise. For the word of the Cross is also ineffable, surpassing our understanding, and its praise belongs to the adorable God alone.

The flaming, whirling sword recalls the words foretold by the prophets, which symbolically showed us the way of the Cross and guaranteed this time that has come. The flaming sword represents the prophetic word that burns like fire and is sharper than any two-edged sword, as Jeremiah said: "Is not My word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" This sword is the prophet's tongue, moving ceaselessly, announcing in advance Christ's coming in the flesh. Emmanuel established it when He entered Paradise and withdrew it when He brought in the thief with Him—for Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. The last of these prophets was John the Baptist, as our Savior

made clear in the Gospels: “For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.”

This wood of the venerated Cross also halted the flood in Noah’s time. The dove, a figure of the Holy Spirit, returned to the ark in the evening, carrying an olive branch, signifying that the earth was dry. For us, the Cross has become the wood of mercy and love, which Emmanuel took upon Himself out of mercy for us. Through it, the Holy Spirit, preaching through the apostles, dried up the impure desires spread over the earth and calmed the flood of sin. This wood performed wonders and miracles in Egypt against Pharaoh, delivering Israel from slavery. Moses was commanded to take a staff and through it demonstrate miraculous power, so that we might learn that the staff worked no power except through the symbol of the hidden, venerated Cross. Moreover, the divine Moses performed miracles by the sign of the Cross. When Amalek and his people refused passage to Israel’s army and even opposed them, Joshua, the army’s leader, stood on the battlefield while Moses stood on the mountain. When Moses stretched out his hands, forming the symbol of the Cross, he brought aid to his people and routed their enemies. Scripture says: “When Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed, but when he lowered them, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side and the other on the other, until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the sword.” You see clearly that the sign of the Cross was symbolized by Moses’ hands, and Joshua, leading the army, crushed the warriors. Likewise, when we trace the seal of the Cross on our foreheads and first name our Savior Jesus Christ, we crush and exterminate the spiritual fighters—the demons and their leader, the Slanderer.

The prophet Ezekiel also saw this sign symbolically: “He had terrifying armor and a protective seal for those who fear the Lord.” When the God of the universe decreed Jerusalem’s ruin, He commanded: “Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of those who sigh and groan over all the abominations committed within it.” And He said: “Go after him through the city and strike; do not let your eye spare, and show no pity. Kill old men, young men, young women, little children, and women, but do not touch anyone on whom is the mark.”

Therefore, today, as we celebrate the anniversary of the terror and earthquake that shook this city, we also join to it the feast of the venerated Cross, showing all this heavenly sign. May the memory of this terror lead us to recognize the sins committed and lament for people of all ages. By displaying the Cross as a universal mark for the crowd, let us place it on the foreheads of the city's inhabitants, so that God, in His mercy and love, may say to the angels of His wrath: "Do not touch anyone on whom is the mark." For you all remember—at least those advanced in age—that terrible and lamentable vision placed before everyone's eyes: the sight of the elderly, the young, and children, their time unfulfilled, suddenly and collectively slain; women buried alive while their infants, still breathing, sought to suckle milk, unaware of death looming over them. And the men! When collapsed houses buried them, those outside thought they had escaped danger, but like runners blind to what lay ahead, they were crushed by another avalanche, involuntarily meeting the death they had fled. Others remained on rooftops soon to collapse, unable to flee due to age or infirmity, or they accepted death as God's decree, saying with the prophet: "Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence?" They were miraculously saved, trapped in crevices, their cries the only sign of life. Still others, standing unharmed, saw walls collapse around them—a sign that God's word governs past, present, and future: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father." And: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." These words show the limits set by Providence, God's supreme love, and His mercy toward us. Then appeared men with broken shoulders or legs, others with severed hands or crushed faces—unrecognizable, half-dead, with no one to save them, as if their souls had departed. Some, still whole-limbed, were trapped like birds in snares; others lay buried with their homes, unable even to cry out. When the houses shook, walls crumbled, and roofs caved in, death threatened so fiercely that those inside lamented being deprived of air, weeping not at burial but before their tombs, as stones and beams crushed them. The city was deserted, its inhabitants fleeing to mountaintops and uninhabited places, for no wall or roof offered safety—all were shaken terribly. Even now, He who made the earth tremble watches it, and the spectacle of violence has not ceased. As Jeremiah says: "His face did not turn from our sins"—until He mixed the cup of His wrath with that of His love, pouring out one into the other, so that the dregs of His wrath might be

exhausted and not all perish at once. Then He decreed the earthquake violently, having laid the cornerstone—His Word, who at the end of days became incarnate and is for us the head of the corner, uniting circumcision and Gentiles in one Gospel proclamation.

When the earthquake ceased, those who fled regained confidence, stepping firmly on the earth to return to the city. But all were struck with terror, trembling like sailors newly disembarked. Walking through the houses, they wept inconsolably, unable to bear the sight: one mourned a father, another a brother, another a son, and another a friend. No bond of affection remained unbroken by death. One mother, full of love for her children, lost her entire lineage at once. Though saved against hope, she realized her suffering and was consumed by grief. Rushing to her ruined home, she loosened her hair, tore her cheeks, and wailed loudly, kneeling on the rubble, peering through gaps in the stones for her children. Finding none, she strained to hear their voices, calling their names amid loud lamentations. Grief stripped her of reason, and finding no comfort, she collapsed lifeless, begging to depart this world with her children. Others, enduring these God-sent trials philosophically, busied themselves burying the dead, carrying them on carts to the holy temple for proper burial. This calamity—though hands might attempt to depict it, they would fail; though words might try to describe it, they would fall short.

Therefore, as we place the wood of the Cross before you, we recall the incarnate God, the great Victim slain for us, who delivered the world from sin. For the altar of propitiation is truly the Cross, as Ezekiel saw in his vision of the spiritual temple to come—the Church. He says: “Before the façade of the holy of holies, there was something like an altar of wood, three cubits high and two cubits long and wide.” Who can think this wooden altar is anything but the Cross, on which Christ offered Himself as a spiritual sacrifice—the Word of God, who became incarnate for us, through whom we are raised to the height of the knowledge of the Holy Trinity? Its height of three cubits signifies this. Its length and width of two cubits each show that He who was stretched on the Cross and suffered in the flesh is the Lord, Creator, and Fashioner of the four corners of the inhabited earth, extending and penetrating all things, holding all in Himself—as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, clearly showing the Cross’s symbol: “That you may comprehend with all the saints

what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Therefore, though there are many ways of atonement, Emmanuel took upon Himself death by the Cross to show that God fills all things. The Cross also corrects contemptible and atheistic heresies. If He who was stretched on the Cross is the God of the universe, the Son of the Father and the Word—at once limited by flesh and unlimited by divinity, passible and impassible—where is there room for those drunk without wine, as the prophet says, these wicked dividers of unity, to parade their error of two natures and ask which nature hung on the Cross? Where will Apollinaris, the babbler, hide, who eliminates the intellect from divine incarnation? If Christ showed His fullness and perfection in divinity by enduring the Cross's death, how could He lack what perfects humanity, leaving our intellect unsaved? Nor does the Cross's language agree with Eutyches' madness, who reduces the nails to mere imagination. For what appearance can be nailed except flesh? A lance-pierced side? A fountain of blood and water gushing forth? It shows Him at once divine and human, undivided in His being—or rather, wholly divine in this, for it flows for salvation after our Lord gave up His spirit. The Cross has also silenced the mouths of pagan demon-worshipers, showing that "all the gods of the nations are demons", as it is written. For the evil and fearful spirits dread this seal—not as coming from one slain by force (as pagan fables claim—far be it!—but as the seal of the Son of God, the Father's Word. Many before Emmanuel were crucified, but their crosses did not terrify demons or drive away evil spirits. The demons themselves testify: "What have You to do with us, Jesus, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

But someone may say, if the Cross has conquered demons, has it not prevailed over Greek-influenced sages? Let the facts speak. Their long-winded discourses are now rejected as baseless, and no one bends their mind to them. But when fishermen and unlearned men spoke with the Cross, multitudes and cities bowed their necks and submitted. How many philosophers have raged against the divine Evangelists? Celsus the Epicurean, the infamous Porphyry, Julian—whose false-named wisdom and tyranny made him proud. But their works are vain: first, because Church writers and teachers have torn their riddles like spiderwebs; second, they suffered the punishment of their folly, ending their lives in demonic and contemptible ways, so that even now they are chiefly hated for their madness or pitied for their misery.

For whoever fights against Christ fights against himself, since the Cross is for us invulnerable armor and an inviolable safeguard. Why did some flee to Daphne, as I have heard, spending sleepless nights there? Why did others, even more faithless and senseless, go to Seleucia, boarding boats when the earthquake struck, thinking bird flights would save them? Who would not mock—or rather, lament—such madness? If the Lord's punishment had been singular, striking only sinners by earthquake, perhaps their thoughtlessness could be excused. But it is impossible to escape the hand of the Almighty. Consider the diversity of such punishments! Some were struck by lightning, others swallowed by the earth, drowned in the sea or floods. What defense against this Wisdom? As the prophet says: "He who flees from the terror shall fall into the pit, and he who climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare." Let such "wise" men speak! Where should one fear an earthquake's terror more? In the city punished for its sin, or in Daphne? If the latter remains unpunished, will it never be? Let it repent with us and wipe away its sins! Where is it safer to dwell? Where there is luxury and laxity, or where there are prayers, vigils, supplications, tears, and trials? Where souls, by preventive fear, renew themselves in remembrance, lift their eyes to heaven, and await mercy from on high? Do not be deceived or provoke God's anger, for "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof", in whom "we live and move and have our being". May He be gracious also to those in error, and may He save every race and age from mortal wounds—the only good and loving One, to whom be glory, honor, and power, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and always and unto ages of ages. Amen.

**HOMILY 32 ON JOHN THE BAPTIST.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Even now, John the Baptist preaches, saying: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths”. And we, while he raises his voice, shall we remain voiceless and silent, and not even bear an echo responding to his word? At the beginning and the end of the proclamation, let us proclaim in return a response. Who will not accuse us of guilty folly? For the sound of the voice of other men, when it is cried in the wilderness, is a noise that strikes the air and falls back without meaning when it raises its voice. But when the word of John cries and announces the coming of the Word in the flesh and cries in souls, not only in those who love God but also in those deprived of God, what thing would there be that would return cried in response, if not: “Let us prepare the way of the Lord, let us make straight his paths”. We too, therefore, in every way, hearing this word: “Before the "Word," he runs ahead”, let us give in response not some meaningless noise but a meaningful word, pleasing to God and profitable to the listeners. Let us be like a lyre, which indeed is not finely crafted, possesses only miserable elements, and produces a sound unfit for true music; but when it is rightly touched by a word of John, it too emits a perfect sound and a song among the songs of Zion, not in a foreign land but in the courts of the Lord and in the midst of Jerusalem. For it is John, in truth, who is this word of the one crying, which has brought with it an abundant wealth of spiritual meanings.

Zachariah, therefore, his father, who was a priest according to the law, had entered the holy of holies and had offered incense. And it was announced to him by Gabriel that he would have a son from his barren wife: he doubted and did not believe. Because of his unbelief, he was condemned to silence. But when the child was born, with the voice he also received the gift of prophecy, and he proclaimed in advance and said: “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways”. Zachariah indeed bore the type of the priesthood and the service of the law, which in its recesses and depths, like incense, has hiddenly the mystical fragrance of the practice of spiritual service and the mystery of the gospel. The Jews not believing in it, the law remains for them voiceless, without effect, without efficacy, and, as for sterile beings, without fruit and without children, for indeed those sacrifices which were performed according to the law have ceased. But for the believers from the

circumcision and for the Gentiles, not only is it not voiceless, but it also speaks in prophesying and is fulfilled spiritually. But for Christians even today, the law prophesies and is practiced by them spiritually when they enter the depths of the spirit, gather its fruit, and are adorned with spiritual gifts; and they say: “By virtue of the worship we have for you, Lord, we have carried in our womb, we have given birth, and we have brought forth the spirit of your salvation”. For thus the Church, which was barren and came from the Gentiles, has borne sevenfold. But the synagogue has grown weak, she who previously had many children. And there were many more children of the one who had been forsaken than of her who had a husband. And just as Zachariah became the father of John, who is the word resounding in the wilderness, and when it was not possible to call him John by tongue, he took a tablet and wrote the name, so too the law was in some way the root and the beginning of the great word of the Gospel, which has filled the inhabited earth, then dried up and deserted of the knowledge of God. What the law could not, as with a tongue, clearly express and say with a voice, it described as on a tablet, through figures. If, therefore, when John came forth from his mother's womb and the swaddling clothes, he overflowed upon us the source of such symbols, how does not the story of his whole life and his angelic conduct flood every ear and every mind like the course of a river? Indeed, immediately, directly from childhood, he directed his zeal toward the wilderness, as toward the place of combat, and his way of life was one of asceticism, unusual and misunderstood by men, and known to God alone, showing also clearly in this that we needed a preacher of newer and in some way immaterial sacrifices, those which he had also named for them the kingdom of God, saying clearly to them: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”.

For as it is not sin that reigns in us, but righteousness, according to the word of the wise Paul, such a life he rightly named the kingdom of God, he who ran ahead of our Savior, he who, already a man and having reached that perfect stature of bodily and spiritual size, by the order of God, like a morning star, appeared from the wilderness, from ancient times, and who has, as witness, lawgiver, and corrector, not one of those inhabitants of the earth, but only He who is in heaven. Thus he appears, not simply alone, but accompanied by prophecy, saying: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare the way of the Lord”, as if to say, pointing as with a finger and crying: “The Lord, the one prophesied from the beginning,

behold, He is near and at the gates. I have come to make His way. For He first wants to walk in you through the commandments, and when He sees in each the way made straight and purified, then He will say: I and the Father will come and make our dwelling with him". And saying these things, he persuaded and drew many to the baptism of repentance, purifying in advance and preparing by water for this gift of the Spirit and this great privilege of filial adoption. For indeed, he was, as it was fitting for him to be, the one who summoned to such symbols, and, running ahead, he preceded the coming of Emmanuel, as he was, John the Baptist. For how would it have sufficed, to lift the spirit of those who listened to him, to turn them away from sin as well as from earthly thoughts, to fix them in heaven, to dispose them to look upward, to make them open their mouths and await the coming of God, to see a man neither seen nor known beforehand, who suddenly appears in the wilderness, and who has come like a power from heaven and who also by his appearance could frighten: severe bodily aspect, hair of the head cut in no particular way, like a Nazirite, thick and dense beard; girded with a leather belt: he brings back to memory those who see him the prophet Elijah: for indeed it is also concerning him that the sacred book speaks of "a hairy man, clothed with a leather belt around his waist", crying the words of Isaiah that proclaim in advance: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths". He has a garment of hair, and, it is not all, he specifies, of camel's hair. And this not without reason, but as by symbol and type. For the camel too is not counted entirely among the unclean animals nor with the clean: it has an intermediate place: it has resemblances in both categories, because of these distinctive traits that are proper to it: the fact of chewing the cud, that is, of bringing back the food absorbed a first time and sending it again under the teeth and chewing it once more, this is the property of clean animals, which also falls to the camel. On the other hand, the fact of not having a cloven hoof is said of the unclean. Now the camel's hoof also is not cloven, thanks to the sole placed under its toes. Therefore, it is for this reason that John was clothed with the hair of this animal, manifesting that the call of the gospel and the kingdom of God, of which he said that it is at hand, receives equally the people of Israel, the clean people, and also those of the unclean Gentiles, and that to those as well as to these, with equal honor, he proclaimed repentance.

But in the manner of Elijah the prophet, when famine seized the land, while he was sitting by the brook Cherith, he was nourished by the ravens symbolically, and he

received in the morning bread, and in the late evening meat, the word showed this: when the law, this shadow, through Moses reigned, and the ray of the knowledge of God was somewhat obscure, the sacrifice was accomplished by the flesh. But when Christ appeared, this Sun of Righteousness, as when the day begins, and the priests from the unclean Gentiles, like ravens, justified by faith, were called to sacrifice, then the figurative sacrifice of the flesh passed and was changed into this perfect and bloodless sacrifice of bread. Thus also John the Baptist delighted in food that was more symbolic and filled with spiritual meanings. He ate locusts and wild honey. On the one hand, the locusts show that the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who have been lowered to the wickedness of venomous reptiles—those whom he also called brood of vipers—he changes into locusts, for among the flying insects, the locust is clean, which does not prevent it from being eaten, and as thanks to its legs it stands upright, it can leap above the earth, which means that it departs and distances itself from earthly thoughts. The honey, on the other hand, signifies that for the people from the Gentiles, who were uncultivated and uncivilized and who had not received the seeds of the precept of the law nor the teaching of the prophets, they had to wait for the sources of honey. And he showed this in the very actions introducing the symbols and the teachers of the Church, who, before all that is under heaven, have set up the spiritual amphora of teaching.

This fact also that he purified and washed in advance in the waters of repentance those who approached, sufficed to persuade them to prepare for the somewhat divine and mysterious charity and the condescension of the coming of Christ, about whose abundant mediation there is no more to say, so divine is it, even more than the descent on Mount Sinai. There indeed they were ordered to clean only their garments: “Until the third day let them purify themselves”. But here: “Let them wash the soul together with the body!” For they heard it said: “Produce fruit worthy of repentance”. Now Moses, by the fast of forty days, was initiated in advance to the law he received on the tablets. But John, passing his whole life without tasting any food habitual to men, fulfilled them; he showed the Word of God who became incarnate and signaled in advance the fulfillment of his symbol, that is, the cross and the redemptive suffering it procures, saying clearly: “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”. I pass over in silence the ceremony of baptism and omit to speak of the fact that he touched by this that untouchable nature, made touchable for our sake, when he placed his right hand on

the head of Emmanuel and baptized, as if he had need of it, the one who is above all power, dominion, and might. (John) showed the superiority (of Jesus) and (this fact) that he had no need of baptism by saying: “I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?” But he heard (in reply): “Let it be so now. For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” and to fill with courage and confidence this (right) hand—for a moment full of terror—by lending and submitting to the divine signs, or to this soul led by God and which had appeared worthy of the revelation of these ineffable things, but which was not puffed up by the greatness of the gift. For when (John) had from God the Father the revelation of what was to come, he said clearly: “I did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize in water, he said to me: He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit”. When (Jesus) made known to him that he had come for baptism, (John) pushed him away, saying: “I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?”: “The commandment of the Father”, he says, “exhorts me to celebrate the mystery. But the majesty of the divinity of the Son, you hide from me and make me fear and withdraw my hand, even if especially it is hidden on account of the Economy. For the excess of the kenosis is more radiant amid the rays of divinity. For who can hide the rays of the Sun of Righteousness?”. Therefore I rightly fear; that is why I await a similar commandment from the Son, who begs me to do the same as the Father. Therefore Jesus made this reply: “Let it be so now”. That is, admit the wisdom of the Economy and only do your office, not fearing to approach my divinity, since I approach you through the incarnation.

Hearing this, let those aggressors afflicted with the disease of Arius and Nestorius be ashamed, since the ones, on the one hand, lower and diminish the equality of honor of God the Word with the Father, and the others, on the other hand, separate the flesh from the Word in the duality of natures, that after the union. For if this were so, the Baptist would not have said: “I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?”; but he would have said: “Although you are greater than I in authority, I nevertheless baptize you, executing the commandment of God, as you also.” But now, by saying the contrary of: “I need to be baptized by you”, he bore witness to himself of the fact that he needs (something) as he is man, but of the fact that he does not need, he bore witness as he is God by nature and can make such gifts to those who need them.

Let us speak therefore of all these other virtues that are found in the Baptist: not because the time (to finish) approaches, for each of the (virtues) would equally need its own homily and hearing: “Greater than the children of women”: by a word that does not lie, it has been testified that he is not only a prophet, but more than a prophet, that he has been called the friend of the bridegroom. Light that shines and runs before the Sun of Righteousness. Head of the violent of the kingdom of heaven. Apostle also before the apostles, because in advance he has preached the Gospel and has cried: “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand”. But it is near his head that I wish to linger a little and stop, given that it was cut off for the truth. He is the first who has shown the stadium of the martyrs of the New Testament, just as also in this same (stadium) he has run to be the precursor. For to Herod, who illegitimately lay with his brother's wife, he said as a master: “It is not lawful for you to have her”. But he did not bear this admonition of rebuke, which was so good, and he thought it difficult not to permit him as legitimate this illegitimate concubinage. He delivered to chains and prison the one who counseled and taught what it is fitting to do, thinking that by this he would shake this unshakable athlete, and that he would begin to introduce fear into this well-armed soul, very strong, filled with a courage worthy of praise from those who have upright thoughts. But he was frustrated in his hope, for it was especially from the time of prison and bonds that he received more reproaches. For what anguishes and frightens those who live in the (pleasures) of the flesh, arouses and elevates the thoughts of the saints toward virtue; and when they look at God, they despise what torments and afflicts the body. That is why, therefore, he cut off his head, rather than the free word. And it was only then, when it could no longer speak, that he saw that he had silenced the tongue of this servant of the divine laws, but it took the place of John, in a manner of even more violent rebuke: this amputation was brought by God and condemned pride by chastisement, given indeed that he who rebuked was struck in his body by the torment, at the very moment when he had dealt the (death) blow. And although Mark says in the Gospel that Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and listened to him with pleasure, how could such an action of tyrants be accomplished? On the one hand, these people are subdued and drawn by virtue, but this virtue, they only praise it and listen to it, because of the great crowd of those who live by it, but they imitate it in no way. And as soon as they are scourged, they separate from what pleased them, take the offensive, and hasten to unmask themselves: they immediately conceive envy and murder. And if,

moreover, women dwell with them, accomplices of the same will to dominate, they bring forth what they had conceived and provoke to death. Thus Herodias, accomplice by her concubinage, and inflamed with anger, took the fatal wage by an obscene dance: the head of John the Baptist, not brought on a cushion or in a basket, or wrapped and tightened in a cloth, but brought on a platter: which for me is a great subject of admiration. For it was necessary that “on a platter this head” be announced, which, from a nourishment of words, welcomed and nourished all the faithful, this (head) that, not without suffering, John had stretched before the sword; being as the head and the first of the martyrs, he delivered the superior member of his body and gave in testimony this sacred head; Christ has given it to us, he who gives what is good to those who dwell in the east. First it remained hidden in the land of Samaria, where Herod reigned; but now in the east, it shines like a bright star, and this not without word or judgment.

For it is because the divine baptism had been prophesied for those who, coming from these insensitive and hard-hearted Gentiles like stones, were to have faith, that he said: “From these stones, God can raise up children to Abraham”. But the promise to Abraham foretold: “In your offspring shall all the nations be blessed”; now his offspring was Christ, for us who have fulfilled this prophecy. And toward those who, coming from the Gentiles, have been called Christians and who with reason and propriety have raised up children to Abraham, has hastened this head which has proclaimed in advance these words. But in running, it has stood at the foot of Mount Lebanon and has blessed the city of Homs, looking from there toward us and making flow abundantly varied healings of all kinds. For he still loves these monasteries in the neighborhood of the mountains and the wilderness and wants to be there even now and to be called “the voice of one crying in the wilderness”, and to completely abolish the worship of demons that rages in Lebanon. This is what one can still see manifesting effectively and extending so to speak every day. For all those who dwell in this region, he transforms them into piety.

Let us honor, therefore, we too, the venerated and holy head of the Baptist, by a change of conduct in accomplishing works of justice. If someone, burning with an illicit love, is about to go toward an illicit liaison and unite with a woman who is not his, let him think that the head of John rises above him, fixing him with anger,

threatening him, and crying: “It is not lawful for you to have her”; and immediately, on the spot, let him take fright, suspend his action, and turn away this torrent of passion. And all you women who are modest and love Christ, amid the delights of the table, turn away your faces from every dance, from the lasciviousness of songs, from lust and words leading to mockery, by representing before your eyes the venerable head of the ambassador and precursor John, placed before you on a platter.

But if someone still finds himself in conflict with a tyrannical leader who is ready to go as far as murder, in exchange for a word of piety, let him contemplate the exaltation of the head of John, symbolic and instructive, and this freedom of the law, and let him think that all this is secondary compared to God, by commending his soul to him, to preserve it without harm. For “the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God”, as a sage says. But let us all “pursue righteousness”, to speak like the apostle, in the fear of God, thinking of John who stands on the course of the Jordan and who touches the head of Emmanuel, he who, being untouchable as the incorporeal Word, eternal and consubstantial with the Father, is also, without change, consubstantial with us men, sin excepted, so that he may draw the Holy Spirit upon us, who have need of him, while in a bodily vision he descends like a dove. For, while he had no need of it as God and true Son of the Father, inseparable from the Spirit, of whom he is consubstantial, he has baptized for us the baptism and has prefigured the foundation of the spiritual filial adoption, that which has been given to men by him, because he is the head of our race and has been named the second Adam.

That is why, every Sunday, we lead you to the baptistery with celebration, praises, prayers, and supplications, to remind us of these engagements established with God, when we have renounced Satan and evil works, lest we come to forget the forgiveness of our sins, the gift of the Spirit, the favor of filial adoption, and to preserve this wealth by all means, not returning to that from which we have come out. For we need much support, when, by weariness, we bend toward the earth and run the risk of falling, but of this also are accused those who love to dispute and who sharpen on us their envious tongues; they say indeed: “This venerable place of the baptistery must not be opened, except once a year.” Where do they take this? Or what law do they bring forth to prove it? None, apart from their ill will that

hates men. Why, indeed, in other houses and in the temples of prayer, every day you see these places of the baptistery open and find nothing to reproach? But you consider only one church and the baptistery that is there, although in all is found the same, venerable and respectable. It is necessary, therefore, either that the others be closed, or, when this one is opened on Sunday with songs and spiritual supplications, that it does not fall under an accusation, but rather that it arouses the praise of the pious.

But for me it is still from the prediction of a prophet that I draw a law to defend myself, concerning this praiseworthy and God-loving action. Ezekiel, indeed, this seer of divine visions, when he saw this future church prefigured by the eyes of prophecy, wrote thus: “This, says the Lord Yahweh, is the gate of the inner court, which faces east; let it remain closed six days, those of labor; but on the day of the Sabbath, let it be opened, and on the day of the new moon, let it be opened”. But what is this inner court which has a gate facing east, if not the baptistery which has a source that gives life, which is the gate and the entrance that leads to the paradise planted in the east. That this gate, the seventh day, was opened, this has been shown very clearly by the law and the prophets. As for the new moon, it is on this Sunday, head of the resurrection and the new life, that it has been opened by the evangelical practice, very clearly and very luminously. Now Sunday is indeed the whole conduct and life of those who after the coming of Christ walk in newness of life, according to the word of the divine apostle: according to these spiritual words he has given us the reasons to remember John, the messenger who runs before Christ. To meditate on this, to be in it at all times, let us pray in Christ Our Lord, to whom be glory with the Father, with his Holy and consubstantial Spirit, now and at all times and for the ages of ages! Amen! The End.

## HOMILY 33 ON THE MAN BORN BLIND, CONCERNING WHOM THE DISCIPLES ASKED OUR LORD: "RABBI, WHO SINNED, THIS MAN OR HIS PARENTS, THAT HE WAS BORN BLIND?" TABLE OF CONTENTS

Would you like us to approach this man born blind and, as if on golden soil, extract a small portion and, through the beneficial and light-bearing blindness of this man, make ourselves shine with the light of knowledge, as a prophet says? I know well that you consent to this and that, for such an occupation, you feel no satiety at all. Indeed, you hasten and eagerly await us to speak immediately and without delay what would require much labor. Let us approach, however, after placing our trust not in our talent but in your charity. The disciples, says (the Gospel), questioned Jesus, saying: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”. Rightly and fittingly for what was proposed to them in advance, they called Him “Rabbi”, that is, Teacher. For the question itself required very profound teaching. But what does the Giver of Wisdom, this Preacher and Leader, answer? A concise and brief word, as proclaimed in advance by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “It is a word spoken briefly that the Lord will accomplish on earth”. But it is a concise and brief word, which in few words contains much meaning, which has also stopped the chatter of the profane wise and silenced it, because it has persuaded them all together with invincible force and drawn them inflexibly to itself. “Neither this man sinned, nor his parents”, He says: in these few syllables, He overturned two very perverse and godless opinions, one pagan (Greek), the other Jewish. The pagans, indeed, say that souls existed before the life of the world and before bodies, and that, although they are rational spirits, they descended because of some sin and as a punishment, and were bound to thick bodies. And that is why, they say, bodies are called thus, because it is as in a “sēma” (tomb) and a sepulcher that these (souls) are enclosed in the flesh; and the poets call [the body] “sēma”. Consequently, they make the wretched souls descend even into the bodies of animals, wild beasts, reptiles, birds, and even trees; afterward, they say, they are raised again to their original rational state. But how can it be that these souls, having passed through irrationality and the nature of wild beasts and acquired their characteristics, becoming very abject, rise again from a state devoid of reason and sensibility to a very good end, without having removed the evil in themselves, but after having clothed themselves, like a bark, with a new material thickness?

Therefore, dismissing such a ridiculous absurdity, our Savior answered: “Neither this man sinned”, to show, concerning the soul of this man, that it was not condemned to be bound to a blind body to atone for the penalty of a sin committed earlier. Indeed, that souls do not preexist but are created simultaneously with the bodies, as a new fixed state, is also made known by the prophet Zechariah, speaking of the God of the universe: “He who forms the spirit of man within him”. For souls were united to bodies not to become worse but, on the contrary, to make them partake in their own rational excellence and bestow it upon them. Consequently, not only to souls but also to bodies, insofar as they have behaved well with them, is promised the glory of the resurrection and the blessed and endless life: concerning this, even the deprivation of eyes or the mutilation of other members cannot cause sorrow, on the one hand, because this (state) makes us more vigilant against sin; on the other hand, because, if borne with patience and gratitude, it prepares the happiness of the future light. Indeed, tell me, what profit has there been for this or that person to have healthy eyes and let them move unrestrainedly to gaze intemperately and covetously, to pursue profane beauties, to be drawn to fornication, and, in place of a banal and defective vision of an ephemeral life, to possess in exchange eternal darkness? For when this finite and limited world of such small measure is compared to the endless life, it is a drop in the immeasurable sea. And for those who are intelligent, who would think that a petty pleasure is more precious than an immense and endless one?

Thus, Christ has shown the falsity of the pagan opinion. But by the (words) He cited afterward, He has shown that the Jewish one is baseless and erroneous. For while they thought that children bear the penalty of sins committed by their parents and misunderstood the (word) foretold by Moses: “I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation”, when He overturns and annihilates their very false opinion and says: “Neither this man sinned”, He immediately adds: “nor his parents”, to show that this blind man is not paying for the sins of his parents. Indeed, what was said by Moses is to be understood in this way: Someone sinned, and God bore it with patience, awaiting his repentance and conversion to good. But that one, without converting, departed with his impiety, being remanded to the future tribunals, when what is according to justice will be rendered to each, on the very just scales of God. Then the son of this father walked in the footsteps of the paternal sin and, like his father, departed this

life. Then, if he who is born of him also resembles his father in sin, this patient (God) shows His care, when, even in this world, He renders according to justice, namely what the father of that one would also receive, if the limits of God's patience were not extended for reasons known to Him who directs this with wisdom. Often indeed, out of tenderness, surpassing the third generation, He brings the sentence of punishment upon the fourth. That is why He does not speak simply of the third or fourth generation but adds and says: "Those who hate Me", to show clearly that it is because of their own hatred, with which they hate God Himself, and not because of their fathers', that they are guilty, even if they have rivaled and imitated them. That this is so, Moses himself has also shown in Deuteronomy, saying: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin". Because of this, to the Jews who raved and said: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge", the prophet Ezekiel also said: "As I live, says the Lord, this proverb shall no more be used in Israel: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." For all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sins shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him".

Thus, it has been shown by the words of our Savior that this blind man was born blind neither because of his own sin nor because of his parents' fault, but "that the works of God might be made manifest in him". But what is this? Earlier, a few verses before, Christ said to the Jews: "Before Abraham was, I am". And while they considered (His) appearance and thought He was only a man, not considering the depth of the mystery nor perceiving His divine essence from before the ages, taking up stones, they thought to stone Him who cannot be seized or held and who can be seized only by His will, when He wills it. But when He wishes to show clearly that He is not only before Abraham but also the Creator of all that exists, He comes to this man born blind, to fix, as Creator, within the cavities of the eyes, the pupils that nature had not given him, and "that the works of God might be made manifest in him". For how is He not clearly God, He who does such things? That is why, after saying these (words), He added: "I must work the works of Him who sent Me", on the one hand escaping the suspicion of seeming to be opposed to

God, on the other making known that He has done all this with the Father and that it is also by His hands that He has made all things. Thus, the miracle He is about to perform, like each of His other works, is the work of the Father, though done by God the Word incarnate, and it is not the mere action of a holy man performing a spiritual favor. And behold the manner of performing the miracle, as befits God! After spitting on the ground and making clay with the spittle, He applied the clay to the eyes of this blind man and said to him: “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is interpreted “Sent”). The clay, on the one hand, reminds us of the first formation, by which He made man from the dust of the earth, as in the book of Job: “Having taken clay, He formed a living being and placed him endowed with speech upon the earth”; on the other hand, the pool of Siloam, that is, “Sent”, signifies in advance the second mystical and spiritual creation, which was to take place through baptism; and both show that Christ Himself is Creator and Renewer. For He was sent, by His will, to us, and this through the incarnation, while as God He is present in every place and fills the universe, not limited by any place, as the prophet David also foretold: “He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions”. After this blind man washed, he returned bearing a double light: one, the light of the bodily eyes from the hand of the Creator; the other, the light of the eyes of the mind from the second creation given by the baptistery. Therefore, after shining with the light of the knowledge of God in the inner man, he cried out reproachfully to the Jews: “Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of one born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing”. And when Jesus asked him: “Do you believe in the Son of God?” He answered and said: “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”. And after Christ said: “You have both seen Him, and it is He who is talking with you”, he cried out, saying: “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him, crying out, as it were, the same words as the apostle Peter: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”.

This blind man also accuses those who, under Christian appearances, have Jewish thoughts and divide Emmanuel Himself by the duality of natures after the union. For of which nature will they say is the operation or the property—the making of pupils from clay? For if it is of the divine (nature), then how is spitting the property of the bodiless, formless, and intangible God? On the other hand, if it is of the human (nature), let them hear not us but this blind man say: “Never since the world

began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of one born blind". But if, because of us, God the Word became incarnate without change, being one of two natures—divinity indeed and humanity—which are perfect according to their proper notion, when the same is of the same essence as the Father, as He is God, and the same is of the same essence as we men, as He became like us, except for sin, then humanly He will spit, and divinely by spitting, the same will make eyes without being divided in any way.

Therefore, we ourselves have, as it were, been enlightened by the luminous faith of this blind man and by Him who healed and enlightened him; but you, what recompense will you give him for the profit? Let each of you, going to his house, place three copper coins in the outstretched hand of each of these blind beggars! And if someone has no money with him now, let him fulfill this pious recommendation on a near day! For to the giver, it is little; but to the receiver, it is much when gathered from all at once. Let the faith of this blind man, which surpasses all estimation, be honored with three coins! For Christ also voluntarily became poor, He who appropriated all that is ours, not counting it a dishonor, that we too, as far as can be understood by men, might become rich with what is His and obtain the kingdom of heaven. To Him be glory forever and ever! Amen!

## HOMILY 34 AFTER IT WAS SHOWN THAT VITALIAN, THAT REBEL WITH AN INFAMOUS NAME, BOWED DOWN IGNOMINIOUSLY WHEN THE MEETING TOOK PLACE ON THIS OCCASION. TABLE OF CONTENTS

The dwelling place of the victories of pious kings is to honor God, who is the master and guide of victory, especially when the achievement of victory occurs without bloodshed, manifesting only the invincible power from on high. Therefore, I too intervene publicly to remind you, solely from the sacred books, of the extraordinary wonders of God, which bear resemblances to those that have taken place among us, and to stir every mouth to praise, perfect commendation, and prayer. For Hezekiah, that friend of God, king of Jerusalem, while the Jews strayed from the laws of their fathers, and the practice of the ceremonies prescribed by Moses, as well as the rest of the purifications, were despised and held as negligible, and they had fallen into serving demons—to the point that even in the temple of God and in that house of prayer, which cannot be touched or looked upon by the unclean, demonic songs were sung, and all the defilements of idols made by human hands and the reproductions of their images were brought in and installed—(Hezekiah, then) wept and lamented over those who strayed so far; he lifted his eyes to heaven with diligence and vigilance, while at the same time the eye of his spirit was wholly astonished and comforted by Him who dwells and abides with those who pray thus. So he purified the temple of this demonic intrusion, and he also reminded his countrymen of those tablets written by God, those heavenly revelations, and that God who had descended on Mount Sinai and spoken with them. He honored the priests who, with great magnificence, cleanse, purify, and refine. He commanded them to sacrifice according to the law, to render God propitious and pleasing, and to celebrate the feast of Passover, for its time had come. But when these (reforms) were thus accomplished, the wretched one, that envious one, could not bear it—he who envies us this face of familiarity with God and seeks to strip us of it, because he himself, willingly, has turned away from it. For this reason, it matters to him to bring us down from there, as he himself rebelled, and to the very extent that we strive more zealously to attain it.
Indeed, he roused against (Hezekiah) the king of the Assyrians, who brought with him an innumerable multitude of armed warriors. God permitted it, He who orchestrates the battles of pious men, He who loved him so much as to test his

virtue in the crucible of trial and, according to the magnitude of the struggle with the Evil One, to prepare, in opposition, these reserves of endurance and strength for those who are unwillingly engaged in the combat.

Rabshakeh, who led the vanguard of the troop commanders and army generals of that barbarian, with a numerous army, approached the wall of Jerusalem and began to cry out to those stationed on the advanced points of the wall: “You must not raise your hands in revolt against your great king, but go away to the land of the Persians and depart from this land which is yours”. O barbarian madness! To those whom he had not yet attacked, he spoke as to captives, now flaunting the size of his army, now the number of his cavalry, seeking to intimidate them with terror. But while each of his (soldiers) stood on the wall without fear and in safety, (Hezekiah) immediately repelled these absurdities and silenced him, shutting his mouth: he looked to God and awaited help from above. Such were indeed the prescriptions and commands of that friend of God, King Hezekiah, those concerning the people and those concerning the leaders of the army. Then that barbarian changed his arrogant tongue to blaspheme against God, as against a weak being, utterly incapable of saving those who hope in Him. He put these words in writing and sent the (letter) to Hezekiah. He, having read it, as the sacred book says, went up to the house of the Lord, which he had cleansed and purified of idolatrous practices. He opened the (letter) before the Lord, and then, weeping bitterly, he spoke remarkable words and prayed. At the end, he added: “Let all the kingdoms of the earth know that You alone, O Lord, are God!”. He who was present even before he read heard him. Then, in the middle of the night, the angel of the Lord went out and struck down in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand men. They rose early in the morning and found all the bodies slain. Such was the slaughter that a single prayer, sprung from a God-loving spirit and drenched in tears, could accomplish. But this has drawn me somewhat away from the blasphemies of Rabshakeh; for when he posed as an impious man against the God of the Universe, who is also the very God of Israel, against the excellence of the knowledge of God, he dared to slander the divine zeal of King Hezekiah, saying: “Do not come and tell me: we trust in the Lord our God, the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah has destroyed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem: Worship before this altar”. And this, although Hezekiah had removed the high places of those gods with lying names—I mean the mountains and hills on which

those senseless people sacrificed—and had transferred the honor of the altar, the adoration, and the worship rendered here to the truth of the one God and to that incommunicable name.

Such has Vitalian, with his impious name, appeared to us. For in imitation of Jeroboam, the servant of Solomon, who had plotted rebellion against his master, coveted power, and persuaded those under his hand to worship those golden calves of Samaria, he was caught in the Jewish snare and the trap of the two natures and the impious division of this one Christ, by him who severed him from his roots, the pious king, by professing one incarnate nature of God the Word, flesh consubstantial with us, which He animated with a rational and spiritual soul, apart from all sin, as the apostolic faith proclaims and transmits. This letter and this vision of contempt pervert the truth; like Rabshakeh, he attacks piety while striving to be the defender of Christian piety, this plunderer of goods not his own, luring many hungry and venal people with the bait of an obol, whom he attracted with a piece of bread. These people, it is true, quickly abandoned him after being satiated and acknowledged the true Lordship. And what the prophet Jeremiah had well foretold happened to him: “The partridge has cried out; it gathers (young) which it did not hatch. So he who unjustly gathers riches will leave half of them, and in the end, he will be a fool”. Yet this king, as if he were truly a friend of Christ and wiser, committed no fault willingly, but found a poor and small humanity—I mean the one called Vitalian, whose name is longer than his body by a hand’s breadth—whom he filled with wickedness, like the Cyclopes, for his mind is unfit for what is royal and of high propriety. He (the emperor) had thought to crush the skull of this one, but he sent him to the distant lands of the Thracians, so that there he might either repent of his wickedness or be slain. For this friend of God truly sings daily with the prophet David: “If I have repaid evil to those who did evil to me, then I would surely fall empty before my enemies”. Therefore, let us also pray for his kingdom of charity, saying: “Save the king, O Lord, and hear us in the day we call upon You”. For it is not to praise the one victorious in peace that we utter these praises, but to give glory to Christ, to whom all praise and glory belong, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and at all times, and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 35 ON THE FACT THAT, LAST YEAR, ON THIS VERY DAY WHEN HE WAS APPOINTED TO THE CITY, HE ADDRESSED THE PEOPLE; AND ON THE HOLY MARTYR ROMANOS. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Many are the reasons that urge me today to speak to your God-loving ears, but it is chiefly because last year, on this present day, we were appointed over you, and because it is in this august dwelling of the martyr, the most glorious Romanos, that we dared to make our voice heard in this sacred church, though we are among the men without intelligence and without voice, but because we have received this favor from Him who has given gifts among men through the divine incarnation and who has established Himself among those who did not obey, turning the unfaithful into faithful, and sons instead of slaves. For if the great Moses, after descending from Mount Sinai and presenting to the people the elementary laws he had heard from God, and after ascending again there, took with him Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, his sons, and seventy elders of Israel, as it is written, and they saw the place where the God of Israel stood, and what was under His feet, like a work of sapphire stone, clear as the appearance of the firmament of heaven; and if they were seen in that place of God and ate and drank, how much more was it necessary for me, who am indeed small and weak, but serving the great word of the Gospel, to bring you up, holy people, royal priesthood, numerous people, onto this spiritual mountain, for when I first approached the words concerning God, it was from there that I made a few drops rain upon you. For as for a strong and abundant rain of theology, I could not, for my part, receive it in deposit or bear it, and you could not hear it: for it is like great waters, according to the prophet, capable of covering the seas. But He has opened for me the eyes of your spirit, and you will see, not a place like a sapphire stone, but the place in which I have shown you the cornerstone, the Word made flesh, who became the mediator of God and men, who united what was distant: on the one hand, the people of the nations with Israel; on the other, earthly things with heavenly things.

Thus enlightened by the beauty of the place, you will be lifted in thought above the heavens and will desire, like the elders of Israel, to eat and drink in that very place. But what are the food and drink found in such a place, if not the enjoyment of divine and sublime thoughts, which these spiritual spirits and rational souls feast

upon? And if, while standing with you on the mountain, I hear, following Moses' example, the call of a very strong voice saying: "Come up to me on the mountain, and remain there, and I will give you these “puxia”, or these tablets, of stone, the law and the commandments I have written, to give them a law," I will not abandon you, as he did with Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel, but you will ascend with me, and you will partake in the revelation at the same time. What is this? For it resembles in some way a riddle. How, after Moses ascended the mountain with Aaron and the elders of Israel, to whom he had also shown the place where God the lawgiver had stood, did he hear again: "Come up to me on the mountain, and I will give you these “puxia” or tablets of stone"? And how, after having once received the commandments of the law, and having descended, as I also said, and presented them to the people, did he hear again: "I will give you these “puxia”, or tablets of stone, the law and the commandments I have written, to give them a law"?

I will explain the reason to you clearly, and you will know, as in darkness and shadow, a partial understanding, an ineffable sea of mysteries. For the law was twofold: on the one hand, superficially and on the surface, it contained the precepts of the letter; on the other hand, in depth, it concealed within it spiritual meanings. This is why the sacred Book says that these tablets of the law were written inside and outside; this is also why Paul sometimes called the law the testament of the letter, and sometimes said: "We know that the law is spiritual." Thus, the letter, which could be received by carnal Israel, still childlike and immature, was what Moses, after descending from the mountain, attested to the people. But afterward, when he took Aaron and the elders of Israel with him, he brought them up to the first summit of the mountain, that is, to the height of a partial ascent of divine revelations, by which only the letter and the meaning within it were revealed. On the other hand, going to receive the writing inside these tablets, I mean the spirit and depth of the law, by which the conditions of evangelical life were shown, and being on the mountain hearing the call to ascent in a higher tone, saying: "Come up to me on the mountain, and remain there, and I will give you these “puxia” or tablets of stone," after rising and being elevated in contemplation, he took with him Jesus, son of Nun, who prefigured my Jesus and God Savior—for indeed, the depth of the law and the mysteries of the Gospel could not be revealed without Jesus—while leaving Aaron and the elders of Israel there, saying: "Stay here in silence

until we return to you." For how could the capacity of carnal Israel and the Levitical priesthood, seeing little and considering only the shadow of the commandments, attain the hidden beauty of the law and be enlightened by spiritual and evangelical thoughts? Indeed, only when Moses was called to a higher contemplation and the inner understanding of the law, while on the mountain, did he hear again: "Come up to me on the mountain." This is clear from these words of God. For He did not say only: "Come up to the mountain," but He also added the word: "to me," which indicates, for us, a higher ascent, and, for God, a closer ascent. Moreover, He did not say: "And I will give you these tablets," but these “puxia” or tablets of stone, showing the incorruptibility of evangelical legislation, for such is the “puxinos” or boxwood. For it is well known that the letter of the law, legislating temporal things, was near corruption and grew old, while the spirit, on the contrary, rejuvenates or becomes childlike, and, enlightened by the Gospel, flourishes anew until the end of this world.

This is also what the bride of the Song of Songs, that is, the Church, indicated. For, designating Christ as her bridegroom and lawgiver, she says: "His belly is a “puxion” or ivory tablet, upon a sapphire stone." Now, who does not know that the belly signifies the depth and secret, ineffable nature of evangelical thoughts, which is truly the “puxion”, or ivory tablet, which does not corrupt or alter with the passage of time? For it is said that the race of elephants has a long life. Yet the bride said that the belly, or tablet, is upon a sapphire stone, because it is upon the stone tablets of the law that it was presented, that is, the doctrine and this evangelical life were prefigured by the letters of the law. Moreover, the sapphire also suits the same letters of the law, of which we heard earlier that the place where God stood while legislating was like sapphire and resembled the appearance of heaven; for the sapphire resembled a vision of heaven in color, indicating the divine and heavenly nature of the commandments.

You see that it was not in vain that I said: "I take you with me at the same time, going toward a very high ascent or elevation of thoughts," and this is entirely just. For Jesus, whose name you yourselves bear and who were first called Christians, was the one who was present with Moses and who, from the first veil and covering of the law, revealed and showed what is inside, the visions that were as if inside, by which He also showed Moses how to execute with great care the model of the

tabernacle of testimony, which was to be made and present the image of the spiritual Church of Christ. This is why He also heard: "And you shall erect the tabernacle according to the model shown to you on the mountain." If, therefore, Jesus Christ was the one who revealed these things, how could I leave you below, you who bear the same name as Christ and were the first to be called Christians, after I have sufficiently tested you? For Moses, after saying to the people: "You shall have no other gods besides me, you shall not make for yourself an idol or any likeness," and after ascending to receive the stone tablets and bringing them down, found that they had made a molten calf; and, enraged, he threw them to the ground and broke them.

But I, after establishing you far from the Chalcedonian error and Dyophysitism, and equally from the atheistic imagination of Eutyches, and showing you the abyss with the two rocks and the intermediate position of truth without error between them, I see you walking a royal road and not deviating to the right or to the left, as it is written, walking straight, advancing before you and pursuing, with the arrows of reason and orthodox dogmas, the enemies of the cross of Christ, and crying out like the psalmist: "You have enlarged my steps under me, and my feet have not slipped; I will pursue my enemies and overtake them, and I will not turn back until they perish." This is why I will not throw the “puxia” or tablets of the dogmas in anger, nor break them at the foot of the mountain, nor repent of the doctrine that is so exact; but I will ascend again and ask the finger of God to give me a law with larger letters and more perfect signs, and to give it in every way, He who wishes to bring us to a perfect degree and says: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." For He who, through Moses, gave others like them to those who had caused these tablets to be broken, how will He not give you, who have not broken them but kept them intact, in addition, knowledge and give you as law greater things, which, for the present moment, I myself voluntarily defer to later.

For now, Romanos, martyr and courageous champion of religion, with whom I have some kinship, draws me to him. For he too, after growing up in the morals and doctrines of Palestine and becoming a model in the ancient disciplines with Zakkai and Alphios, his companions and martyrs, was sent here, by the wisdom that surpasses all understanding, to finish his course and receive the crown of his struggles and inspire others to similar zeal by a fine example of courage. Thus,

being so well disposed, he urged the whole Church of Antioch to bravery and noble boldness for the word of truth. For when the governor Asclepiades, drunk with idolatry, wanted to enter the church and indulge in debauchery in the holy temple, he, like an indomitable commander, after stirring all the brothers with words of piety and rousing them to bravery, forbade him entry, saying to them: "Certainly, even if he enters, he cannot defile these spiritual, untouchable, and pure places, which cannot be defiled; but nevertheless, he will not succeed in carrying out his plan as he thinks." Asclepiades, frightened by this mere hearing and unable to bear the outrage and contempt, immediately had him stand before the tribunal, and, after experiencing his boldness, said to him: "Why do you not answer, O impure one, with the gentleness that befits, as the very religion of Christians also professes?" The disciple of Christ, making a very just distinction on this point, said to him: "Now is the time for bravery, not humility. For in all other circumstances, life for us is moderation or humility, and we breathe gentleness rather than this air; but where the combat for religion presents itself, before idolatrous leaders like you, blinded, who think, by pride and threats, to trample underfoot, annihilate our humility, and set it before them, then we ourselves are from then on very brave, lifting our necks high, raising our eyes to heaven, we who are humble and look to the earth; with a proud spirit, we rise against impiety, we joyfully take upon ourselves death as the ready path that leads to the dwellings above, even mocking the torments, pains, and sufferings of the flesh. For Christ, this power of God and the Father, is the one who fights in us and changes our souls in this praiseworthy and sudden change, about which the prophet David also says: 'It is a change by the right hand of the Most High.'"

At this, Asclepiades, boiling again with impious fury, ordered that the saint be torn apart by hanging him on a cross. But after the servants armed with spears reminded him: "This man is of the blood of the Bouleutai or senators, and therefore he who has been honored by Roman laws should not be dishonored by such torments," he had him taken down from the cross and stood on the ground, and asked him: "If, through his father, he traced his lineage to the Boule, that is, the order of senators." Immediately, when the martyr opened his mouth, he poured forth more than rivers in words, showing by many considerations that he cared nothing for the glory coming from the flesh, which withers like flowers, but that quite different is the honor due to reasonable men by Him who gives them to be led by piety, familiarity

with God; for this is the nobility of the soul for which they are honored even more than kings. Finally, when the judge was defeated by his legitimate frankness and patience in torments, during a great demonstration of religion, sometimes by miracles and sometimes by courage and speech, he decreed against him the penalty of fire. But he, this martyr of truth, affirmed with oaths that, far from undergoing the trial, he would not see this fire in any way. And after this blazing fire was lit before the city gates, as they led him there, while he prayed in his spirit, his tongue silent and lips motionless, a torrential and very abundant rain poured down and extinguished the flames. Romanos, who had perhaps only reached halfway, was brought back, having left, as he had predicted, the invisible flame, but after it was extinguished, it only inflamed the judge's fury more and increased his madness. For he said: "Since it is the season of winter, this rain is due to it and is not the work of the martyr's prayer." Not knowing that He who, by the prayer of the prophet Samuel, thundered mightily, routed, and defeated the foreigners, by a similar prayer also overwhelmed this flame and fulfilled the martyr's prophecy. What did this impious man do? He pronounced a sentence against Romanos's tongue and ordered that it be cut out. For it exasperated him, both when it spoke and when it prayed and prophesied. But when it was cut out, it exasperated him even more, for he who had been deprived of it spoke. Which of these facts concerning him should one marvel at more? It is not easy to say. At the frankness and vigorous boldness of the martyr's tongue, or at the fact that he spoke without a tongue? Now it seems to me that the readiness and boldness of his tongue are more astonishing than the rest, for this is the work of Romanos, and that, of God who works miracles.

For He who once divided the one language of men into many to confound the construction of the tower armed against God at Babel, and who afterward, appearing upon the apostles in tongues of fire, reunited many tongues into one voice for them, what is so great if He also spoke in Romanos without the organ of speech? For those who speak by the Spirit use words of fire, even when they have a tongue of flesh; and to confirm that this is so, the martyr spoke after its removal. This is why we must believe all such facts. And hearing that we are baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire, we must not look only at the waters but, with the eyes of faith, see the fire and reflect on it in spirit. Moreover, I say the same also concerning the bloodless sacrifice: not to linger on what appears, but to raise our understanding to

what is grasped by faith, and to be persuaded with certainty that we see, clearly and sensibly, even what is spiritual. These things are clear to those instructed in the mysteries, even if we ourselves speak of them only in a veiled manner, on account of ears not instructed in the mysteries.

But concerning the truly great soul of Romanos, one can also marvel at his concern for the progress of the brothers. For to confirm their faith, he did not think the astonishing speech that followed the removal of his tongue sufficient; but using, as ink, the blood flowing from it, he wrote instructions useful to souls and salutary dogmas of faith, making known that all blood shed for religion, added to the first blood of the Lamb offered for us and God, is the blood of the covenant, which recalls the forgiveness of sins descended from the cross, for which we must suffer all, even if none of our sufferings deserve it. Now, when the most glorious martyr Romanos wrote and said such things, he said that he glorifies the Father with the Son, making known the equality of essence and honor of the two and refuting the blasphemous opinion of Arius, which, because it glorifies the Father by the Son only, drags down and lowers to the contemptible condition of creatures the essence of the Only One who is before the ages. For the word of truth raises glory to the Father both with the Son and by the Son: with the Son, because the Son is eternal God of God, and timeless and infinite light of light; by the Son, moreover, because when He emptied Himself at the end of days, He was called the apostle and high priest of our confession, when, according to our profession for Him, He made Himself priest, for Himself and for the Father, and in this He appeared the mediator between us and God. But the heirs and flatterers of Arius's rage reject His goodwill and condescension toward us, depriving Him of His essence and divinity equal in glory to the Father's. To them, since they are among His neighbors, the martyr launches the arrows of theology, he who here at the outset also set in motion our inert and motionless tongue and moistened it with the blood of his own tongue, to the point that at the beginning of the homily I dared to compare myself to Moses, when I rose with the greatness of the Gospel and forgot my weakness and smallness. You, then, venerating the removal and blood of the martyr's tongue, drive far from you the senseless insult and do not soil your tongues and these lips reddened by the blood of the incarnate God, with the stain of bad conversation and insults. On the contrary, bless also those who insult you, for it is to this that you have been called, that you may inherit blessing; and in driving away these

shameful passions, honor the glorious passions of the martyrs. For this is the true memory and feast of the saints, that we gather and reap something profitable for our souls, to the glory of Christ, the God who is helpful in all things, to whom belongs all glory and honor and power, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

## HOMILY 36 ON THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Admiring the great wonder of the present feast, I am divided in spirit: for I am compelled to keep total silence, and at the same time to speak abundantly. Indeed, who, upon hearing that we celebrate the day of the nativity of the Uncreated One and contemplating this marvel, would not be seized with awe and honor with silence what cannot be comprehended? But who, upon learning the very reason why the Word, exalted above all, descended to such utter lowliness and consented to partake in a fleshly birth—for us who had fallen into the flesh and had disfigured by our passions the marvelous beauty of the soul in which we were made in the image of our Creator—who would not soar in spirit, awaken to praise Him, and be stirred and exalted by the greatness of His charity? Who would not, like the three children in the furnace of Babylon, call upon the angels and the heavenly hosts, as well as all creation endowed with reason and sensation, to join in praise, saying: “Bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord; glorify Him and exalt Him forever!” For truly, all creation is honored by the divine incarnation—especially us first, because the Word partook of our creaturely state, “without sin”, and did not become man by casting off what He is, God. The rest of creation, too, is honored because the Creator deigned to be truly created, and the Maker appeared among His works. But the visible world benefits from this glorious undertaking in another way, for it was made for our service and utility. For it was for me that the sun, moon, and stars were established to give light, the sky to rain, the air to nourish, the earth to bear fruit, and all else to fulfill our needs. Yet it was not just for them to serve us, since we had withdrawn the honor due to the Lordship, having been ensnared by the lordship of sin and sunk into vanity. This is why Paul said: “The creation was subjected to futility, not willingly”, as if endowing the soulless and insensible with feeling to better show the extent of our corruption and malice, and the world’s bondage beyond what is fitting. But when the Word became incarnate, planted His bodily feet on the earth, was seen, and conversed with men—not recognized as the only Son and supreme God, but bearing all things within Himself and, coming from the Father, entering the habitable earth as the firstborn among many brethren—He freed creation, as far as it concerned Him, from being enslaved to futility. Nay, He made it act beyond what was required. For whereas before it was ordained to serve man made in God’s image, now it accepted

God as one among many—He who, for our sake, became poor to be incarnate, who destroys sin, makes the earth a heaven, plants virginity there, a bodiless life, and an angelic state, and draws many men to imitate Him. This is what the prophet Habakkuk also proclaimed in advance: "You went forth for the salvation of Your people, to save Your anointed." Likewise, the divine Paul sought to show this when he wrote to the Corinthians: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Who, then, would not praise with a thousand voices this magnificent and glorious undertaking?

Yet who would not shed tears mingled with joy and spiritual exultation, or be moved inwardly by repentance, seeing himself like a stone, devoid of feeling? For we, who were unworthy to walk the earth—so much that it groaned—were suddenly transferred to heaven. Nay, we who dwell on earth as in heaven, transformed by grace, walk in imitation of Christ. Because of the sublimity of this charity, the host of angels is filled with awe and admiration, proclaiming in wonder: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men." What is thus proclaimed—to give glory for this utter abasement—is said to be the work not of those on earth but (and rightly so) of the heavenly hosts. For the more this Being of such lofty nature humbled Himself, the greater the reasons for glory. But they have even more cause to glorify and praise, for it is their task above all to proclaim Him, the Most High, more than anyone, since what He is by essence, He possesses in perfect fullness, incapable of any increase.

Why, then, do they say: "Glory to God in the highest"? They also provide the reason: "Peace on earth, goodwill among men." This, too, is the cry of those astonished and amazed. For was there truly peace on earth? On this earth that was at enmity with God, filled with altars, the smell of sacrifices, and blood, that had fashioned and worshiped non-gods? And "goodwill among men"—when they had lost the privilege of being human, sinking into irrationality! For "man, when honored, does not understand; he is like the senseless beasts and resembles them", as we hear the psalmist cry. Yet these very ones, who were thus in evil, sunk to the lowest contempt and vileness, and had cast away rational decency, hiding the image of God under demonic likeness—these, God not only pitied but also loved. For this is what goodwill means: that He came not by force or necessity, but by spontaneous movement and His own will, with even greater care for each beloved

one. Goodwill, being called "good," also shows God's unrepentant gifts, for what is deemed good never brings regret. Thus Paul says: "The gifts of God are without repentance", and he calls them so. Would that we not prove ourselves unworthy of grace! All this love is for His image: thus is He disposed toward His work, with love. Where is there a clearer proof of His love and peace than this: that He pursued the one lost far off, the one hostile to Him, the one sought through the law and prophets but never fully found? So that, though the one He sought was an adversary, it was still him He sought. For, being God, He became man—unchanged and truly—and while voluntarily dwelling among us, as the prophet says, He proclaimed: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I revealed Myself to those who did not ask for Me." Because to us, lost in the darkness of sin and turned from error to the knowledge of God, He says to the Father through the psalmist: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You."

John the Baptist, too, when he saw Him with spiritual eyes mingling and conversing with us, said: "Among you stands One whom you do not know." For just as a lover burns with greater love, seeking ways to be with the beloved, trying—how often!—to capture his prey by a snare, so Emmanuel bound Himself to us by kinship of flesh, to us who had lost familiarity with Him though we were His image. Thus, when He became man, we might draw near to Him—to whom, as God, we could not approach before—and confess that He is truly God, even as He became man and humbled Himself, which is also worthy of wonder. Is this not goodwill? Is this not supreme love, this disposition of His toward us? Therefore, the angels praised, saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men." Clearly, what the angels praised was first revealed to the shepherds—men who prefigured those who would shepherd the churches, and rightly so. For they needed to hear first: "On earth peace", and then those who would proclaim peace to the whole Church. The shepherds' joy at this revelation signifies plainly that it was for this wandering flock that the Good Shepherd came. For nothing gladdens shepherds more than finding a lost sheep: no one else could find it but Christ, the Chief Shepherd. What did those who heard the heavenly host praising say? "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this word that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known." O divine mystery worthy of God! For Bethlehem means "House of Bread." Where else should the shepherds, after the

proclamation of peace, run but to the spiritual house of heavenly bread—the Church? For Christ is the living bread, who came down from heaven and was given for the life of the world, as He says in the Gospels.

These, then, are the lessons we gather from the shepherds. But much profit may also be found in the Magi. Yet to expound on them now would not suit the present occasion, lest by setting before you a spiritual feast beyond measure, I lessen its delight and burden the hearing with excess. One thing alone about them astonishes me: though they had long gazed at the heavens and studied the stars (for such was the skill of the Chaldeans, among whom the Magi were), they had not recognized the Creator of heaven and earth. But when they saw an unusual star—appearing from above yet guiding them to look below—it rested over the place where the Child was and, in a way, proclaimed as John said: "He who comes from above is above all." They met Him in the Virgin's womb as in heaven, and seeing the newborn, they worshiped Him as the mighty God—for they would not have offered incense had they not believed Him such. By adding gold and paying homage as to a king, they testified to His universal power. By offering myrrh, they foreshadowed the sweetness of His burial spices, as Paul later meditated: "We are the fragrance of Christ." Did they announce the unity of Emmanuel, recognizing the same Being as God, King, and Sufferer buried in the flesh? For though the One who suffered came according to the word of the Economy (for the impassible was incarnate), the same Being suffers humanly yet remains divinely impassible. Do not divide Him into two natures, for He was united indissolubly, so that a better Advocate appeared—without the impassibility of God the Word being lost—in Him who, though hypostatically united to a passible body, remained impassible.

I pass over the manger, where the Word ruled the speechless, signifying that He came to save those who had become like beasts and to appear among them. As for the Virgin, I shall offer her a separate discourse, for she alone would suffice for many sermons. Moreover, what is now said traces back to her as to a good root, for rightly did she hear from Elizabeth: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." He who blesses the fruit blesses the womb that bore it. Yet I know not how the foul opinion of Eutyches arose. Does not every fruit spring from the essence of the tree that bears it? Is it not of the same nature and not of another, whatever it may be? How, then, can you say that Emmanuel's body is not

from Mary, O fool? While this womb bore the blessed and true fruit, you make the mother a mere fiction, reducing our Savior to a phantom and a dream. If the woman taken from Adam's side, created of his essence, and who sinned with him in transgressing the commandment, is of the same essence, so too is the Virgin, through whom Christ, the second Adam, appeared—He who takes away the sin of the world. As Paul says: "Those who died in Adam shall be made alive in Christ."

If the Virgin contributed nothing of her essence to Emmanuel's birth, then she is not truly the Mother of God. For how could she give birth to divinity alone through flesh? But if the Word of God hypostatically united Himself to the body from her, animated by a rational and intelligent soul, so that He too was conceived, this proves He was incarnate and born in a manner worthy of God, the bonds of virginity remaining unbroken. Thus, Mary, bearing God incarnate and made man, is the Mother of God. For this is the astounding wonder: that true birth did not violate virginity. If she bore a shadow or illusion, it would be no great marvel—for bearing the imaginary leaves virginity intact. But as for us, let us bid farewell to the fables of Eutyches and Apollinarius, which destroy all mystery, as well as the Jewish severance of Nestorius.

Let us instead praise Christ as one of two perfect natures—divinity and humanity—united without division after the union, He who for our sake took on our flesh, sin excepted. Let us honor the Virgin Mother of God and pray for her intercession. Let these be honors to her, for through her virginity we receive instruction in purity. I speak especially to godly women, rejoicing to see you gladly turn to the memory of the Mother of God, don festive attire, and adorn yourselves modestly for the glory of your sex. Yet I exhort you to adorn the inner self: virgins with purity, wives with love for their husbands and godly upbringing of children—teaching them to frequent churches and prayer houses, not theaters, that they may hear divine books and partake of holy mysteries. For when these habits take root in childhood, they lead to excellence, forming the foundation of a noble life and bringing God's aid to save them from the bitter, murderous arrows of the Slanderer. To all, I prescribe mercy toward the needy, for this is the common teaching and precept. What else shall we give to Him who had such mercy on us, if not mercy in imitation of Him toward our fellow men? He counts it as done to Himself, saying: "You did it to Me." As when you see a rare and precious golden ornament and

hasten to buy it and bring it to the church in full view, so let each woman say to her husband: “Give me gold or silver to relieve the poor, that I may adorn my soul. For I blush to see no ornament for the Mother of God, while I lack any adornment that might please her!” If you go thus to her holy house, clad in spiritual splendor, you will bring great blessing to your husband and children upon returning home. For bodily adornment displays your beauty alone, but the soul’s beauty shows your husband and children sharing in this spiritual profit.

See how the Mother of God has led us to speak these things, though we intended only to pass over them briefly. Yet she permits none—not even the unwise and ignorant—to forget that she is the Mother of God the Word and Wisdom. But I would draw further profit from the shepherds, for the divine Gospel says of them: “They were keeping watch over their flocks by night, and behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.” This word also designates those who lead rational flocks: unless they are vigilant and keep night watches—guiding their charges from the world’s dark imaginings to the splendor of resurrection and the life to come—the Lord’s glory will not shine upon them. For if Jacob, tending Laban’s flocks, said: “By day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and sleep fled from my eyes”, what shall we do, appointed to shepherd God’s image, yet sleeping carelessly, in danger of being devoured by wild beasts? But mighty is the God who came down from above, and He is not far from filling us all with His words. For to us, His wonder is faithful, and none remember that He has not led us all to what pleases Him—to His glory and that of the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 37 ON BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN. IT WAS DELIVERED IN THE SANCTUARY OF THE HOLY MARTYR IGNATIUS. TABLE OF CONTENTS

This glorious and truly spiritual feast, I had decided, not of my own will, to pass over in silence, being preoccupied by the cares of many affairs, to the point that I no longer even had breath to breathe. For the affairs of the Church, for us, are pitiable and bring us more worries than profits; we are overwhelmed by a great mass of debts, and the moneylenders impose on us a great quantity of interest. Indeed, concerning those who slander us, who despise us, and who weave around us all these countless machinations, what more must we say? While these people ought to have pity on us and no injustice is done to them, they send us away, they reproach us for breathing the same air, they turn away from pious words, they watch for deadlines, and they observe our affairs very attentively. For them, we have no other way to act than to say with the psalmist: “The Lord is my support; I will not fear what a man may do to me”, unless it is to close our mouths, for they lead us to other reflections. But while it was so for me yesterday, as evening was already approaching, this word of Jeremiah came to me: “And there was in my heart like a burning fire, shining and enclosed in my bones, and I collapsed in all my limbs”. And seeing rise at our gates this much-loved day of the commemoration of Basil and Gregory, I could no longer bear silence, but, like Elihu, I said to myself: “I will speak, that I may find rest”, and immediately, without delay, just as the shadow of the apostle Peter brought healing to those upon whom it fell, so it was also for me, for the thought of these God-clad men fell upon me like a ray, when I did not expect it; a light filled me and forced me to speak. And I was in no way different from Ezekiel, who ate the divine scroll of the book and said: “And in my mouth, it was to me like sweet honey”. Yes, truly, the mere mention of these God-clad doctors is much sweeter than honey, for they spoke words that are far sweeter than honey, and in which also the Bridegroom, in the Song of Songs, who is Christ, took delight, saying: “Your lips, O bride, drop a ray of honey. Honey and milk are under your tongue”. For who is there who, encountering their wise teaching, has not been drawn in his soul and carried away in his spirit and found himself entirely in the life to come, and has not proclaimed, like Paul: “The form of this world is passing away”?

What young man, with a body full of ardor, burning in the flower of youth and drawn toward impure loves by the impulse of passion, who, upon inclining his ear to the words of these God-inspired men, does not immediately become modest, lower his gaze, and, forgetting the fire of passions, become colder than snow? Indeed, the fear of eternal sufferings that have been decreed withers him, and he fears lest his eye look somewhere thoughtlessly and his lustful gaze be judged as severely as adultery. Who among those who have a purse full of riches and a hand withered, paralyzed, and bound by the chain of avarice, from the day he frequents the writings of these men, does not imagine hearing Jesus say to him: “Stretch out your hand”? Yes, he stretched it out, and it was restored to health, distributing and giving to the poor, as it is written, so that all who see it will praise the Lord who worked this wonder. Who is there who, opening his mouth wide to trade and amass riches, ruminating and meditating on ways to grow wealthy, if ever he holds a writing of the teaching of these men, does not suffer the same fate as the one who bought a field and found a hidden treasure, as the sacred book of the Gospels says? And if he diligently fixes his mind on what is written there, he will find the precious pearl and, illuminated in the eye of his spirit by the light of these (writings), he will consider, like Paul, all other things as rubbish and sell them in haste. He will obtain what is worthy to be bought and will say perfectly and like the apostle: “These gains that I had, I considered them a loss because of Christ. Indeed, I consider all things as a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord”. For truly, the possession of things that last only a moment is a loss: at the very moment one possesses them, they abandon, so to speak, the one who possesses them. For true possession is the possession of things that will not be taken away, as is precisely the case with those of this world, for those whom you rightly call rich in dreams. Indeed, a man cannot take all things with him when he dies, as we hear David proclaim.

But if, perhaps, you say that their words and teachings profit only men and not at all women, take for me the sermon of Basil against the lovers of riches, read it before your wife, and you will see that immediately, without delay, she will cast far from her her golden jewels like chains, despise her soft and shining garments as if they were filthy rags. She will become a "philosopher," that is, a lover of wisdom, rather than a lover of adornment, hasten toward the kingdom of heaven, practice justice with you, and multiply every good work. For this reason, in Paradise, God

assigned Eve to Adam: He gave her to him as a prototype, a helper for virtue and the service of God, and not as a partner for coupling and passion. Indeed, it was when Adam was outside of paradise that he knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, for it was at the moment when man, because of his disobedience, fell from the immortality that had been promised to him, that the procreation of children came to his aid to ensure the succession of the race.

Thus, I truly have reason to complain against you, though it concerns the frivolity and softness of your wives, you who hold the rank of leader but give no sound and spiritual teaching to your wives. Why do I say this? It is because I see that everything is done in the opposite way, for it happens from time to time that you accuse them with bitterness and severity: if you see them only walking with assiduity and diligence toward the church, then you call this practice difficult and unbearable, while you spend the whole day idling in the public square, and at mealtime you sprawl on your couches and fill your bellies to excess, while your wives throw and prepare to run again to the church for the evening office, to share their obol with the poor, to participate in the divine mysteries, and to surround the walls of your houses with an angelic guard, for: “The Angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them”. Thus, they are naturally inclined toward good and possess the love of the teaching of piety and the love of God, unless you hinder their readiness to obey me. Now they are obedient, I know, for their salvation is of great value to them. Therefore, all that you command them that is worthy and fitting from a leader, let them accomplish in all fear; but all that falls outside what is right and turns away from God, let them reject as worthy of contempt, saying this divine word: “It is better to obey God than men”. And when you see them in virtue, may it happen to you also, even if it is late, to become pious, delighting together in the reward that comes from heaven and attributing happiness to your fortunate marriage.

I say this for no other reason than to show clearly that Basil and Gregory, these blessed universal and natural doctors, who present themselves to every race and age with equal honor, opening the mouth of their intelligence with great zeal, and drawing, as fully as is possible for men, from the abundant streams of the Spirit, have become arms of the river that rejoice the city of God, a sign of the Church of Christ. For it is entirely fitting to compare to the current and the tributary of a river

their teaching, which overturned the twisted opinions of Arius and Eunomius, who said that the Creator of the worlds, the Word and Son of God, was only a creature, like a tower built on sand, and which purified the believing souls of the stagnant scum of the mud of this world, and which introduced and championed the contemplation of nature, teaching, as much as possible, that by wise and skillful means, the Creator brought creation into existence. As a wise man said: “By the beauty of created things and the wisdom found in them, their Author is seen analogically”, and it is from the created world that His invisible attributes are known, as Paul said philosophically. But the truly luminous teaching of these men of God, more than that of any other man, penetrated the depths of theology. For who, when he reads the theological works of Gregory, or rather his revelations, to speak more justly, is not lifted to the heights, does not fly upward toward the Trinity, does not find himself outside his body, and does not immediately pass beyond all sensible and intelligible creation?

Now who is so disdainful of the external form of these discourses that, having considered the wisdom of these men, he does not enroll himself with the unlettered and rustic, and like Moses, who was modest but was introduced to the greatness of the contemplation of God and became the instructor of his people, does not say for the love of truth: “I am mute and slow of tongue”? But it seems to me that these discourses also deserve that one be grateful to these men who spoke of the things of God. For just as, if a man takes a royal cloak and clothes a hunchback with deformed feet and a squinting gaze, he will only make the one he has clothed more mocked, for it will be, as the proverb says, “like a gold ring in a pig’s snout”. But if it is a young man of beautiful stature and dazzling beauty that he adorns with this royal purple garment, double is the praise of his beauty, the brilliance of each element making the other shine, and the pleasure also being more refined for those who see him. Thus, when the wise among the Greeks occupied themselves with ridiculous theogony—I do not say "theology"—with such discourses, and, with the flower of eloquence, made gods of the elements of the world—with Zeus they clothed an adulterer, with Hephaestus a lame man, and with Dionysus an effeminate—they showed only more clearly that they were ridiculous, mocking their turpitude with seductive discourses.

But Basil and Gregory, consecrating to the Intelligence and the Almighty Father and the Word equal to Him in eternity, and to the Spirit equal to them in essence, this word "theology," truly made theology, that which proclaims the essential Intelligence and the living Word and the Spirit who is a Person; and thus the terms received the honor proper to them, serving the word and the source of all wisdom and knowledge and casting far from them the unreasonable slavery of paganism like a tyranny.

But there is also a great difference between the heresiarchs and these saints; for Apollinaris and Diodorus, these wicked and abominable men, were full of many teachings and left behind labors and writings, but, unlike those of Basil and Gregory, without the seasoning of apostolic salt, of which Paul speaks: “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt”. For this reason also, they fell into the snare of the abominable spirit and engendered heresies, and their discourse is without grace and wearies the readers, so that if we compare them to one another, we will say to them, according to the word of the prophet Jeremiah: “Can straw be compared to grain”? On the contrary, the writings of these Cappadocians are like living words that resound in the churches and are resonant, and to their doctrines we appeal as to laws, in the face of every heresy.

But while they thus pursued the first place for orthodox teaching and divine wisdom, they had also engaged in the great combats of martyrdom. Basil, he vanquished the fury of the emperor Valens, both by a word of true religion and by his virile and powerful doctrine, so that he also came to overcome exile and make it disappear by a glorious miracle. For the pen with which the emperor wrote betrayed the hand (that gave) the order of exile: three times it broke in the hand of the one who wrote, forbidding and annulling the unjust sentence. Gregory, for his part, resisted in person these bands of wild beasts, the Arians and the Pneumatomachi, in the imperial city, and, like a well-known ram of the flock, he entered among them, trusting in Him who said: “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves”; many times he was stoned and came close to death, but he overthrew and destroyed them all together. Thus they appeared as martyrs by desire, for they were not nailed to their thrones, nor bound to the delights of this world, but, full of emulation for Ignatius, clad in God, they said: “It is beautiful to lie down outside the world and to rise in Christ”.

This is why we have gathered you in this house, his house of prayer, for the commemoration of these saints, and we have pronounced their praise in a discourse, honoring the master by his disciples, those who have imitated his good conduct as a pastor full of struggles. But when last night left me, as I was writing these lines, I was obliged to finish this discourse, despite my ardent desire to say still many things, and I felt the same pain as these women who, not having filled the normal time to give birth, do not come to term, but bring forth children who are miscarriages. But may this Trinity, perfect in all things and holy, for the honor of these saints who have spoken perfectly of divine things, receive our imperfect child as if it were perfect, and give a reward not inferior, because of the abundance of His good will. To Him be glory forever! Amen!

**HOMILY 38 ON THE LIGHTS (EPIPHANY). THIS IS THE SECOND.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

In celebrating the feast of the lights, we will manifest in words the brightness that this feast has made shine in our minds, so that through it we may resemble the radiance of light. For, just as the characteristic of a radiance is that it extends its own illumination over many, warms each equally, and illuminates with similar dignity the faces of those who behold it, so too the proper function of speech is that it produces in many this divine knowledge and illumination that enkindles and enlightens. Who, indeed, seeing Jesus standing in the midst of the waters of the Jordan, hearing the voice coming as from the person of the Father and saying: “You are my Son, the Beloved?” and seeing the Holy Spirit descend with a bodily appearance like a dove and remain upon Him, will not remember the words of the prophet and say what the divine David cried out, in anticipation, to the God and Father of all, when he exclaimed: “In Your light we shall see light?” For if the Son is the light of the Father, being the radiance of His glory and the image of His substance, and if in His very light we see another light, the Holy Spirit, is it not evident that the triple light shining with equal brightness shows without confusion the images of their three hypostases and their one divinity? This is why we name this feast "The Lights," because through it we understand more clearly, as by three lights, the one identity of essence, in the three properties of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This “You are my Son” introduces indeed the participation of nature and being, which the Father possesses in relation to the Son. For He does not say: "You have become," but "You are my Son." This "You are" declares at once His existence and His essence. Thus also, speaking to Moses, He says: “I am He who is”. This is also what the prophet referred to when in his song he says: “He who exists before the ages”.

Let these things, then, confound those called the mad Arians, who, from the fact that He is the Son—eternally and infinitely existing in the same manner as the Father—say that He is only a creature and a fabrication! Let them also confound the heirs of the folly of Nestorius, who see Jesus, as the true Son of the true God, in an indivisible and inseparable manner, hear: “You are my Son”, and yet divide this only Son by a dyophysitism that would have followed the union! This "You," indeed, was directed, logically, toward the One who was visible. For if the One

who was visible was, according to their madness, divided from the One who was intelligible—that is, the human nature from the divine—by duplication, if He is not one, made of two without confusion, namely of divinity and humanity, that is, one hypostasis of God the Word incarnate, He would not have said: "You are," but "He who is in you is my Son." For if the humanity were separated by nature from the divinity, the consequence would have been that it too would have needed filial adoption like us. But for us, is it not fitting precisely to hear from God, not: "You are my son," but: "You have become my son"? For what He is by nature, we shall be by grace. But this also shows me the equality of honor of the Spirit and the same divinity. For what John the Baptist showed when he said: “But He who sent me to baptize in water said to me: 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.” The Spirit indeed descended upon Him according to the Economy, as He is truly man, but remained as God, in God, not having departed from Him any more than before, for He is in Him inseparably. It is according to our understanding and in conformity with the condescension of the Economy that the Gospel word is thus presented. For, having descended “with a bodily appearance” like a dove, He did not always remain thus upon Him; but, as the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son, so also the Spirit is in the Son and the Son in the Spirit.

But learn a much more exact theology from the words of the Baptist, for he says: “I have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.” "Because," he says, "I have seen that the Spirit remains divinely in the Son, I have understood that, one for the Father and the Son, is the essence and the divinity. And I have testified that this is the Son of God, He who baptizes in the Holy Spirit." He could not give it as a gift if the Holy Spirit did not belong to Him and did not share the same essence with Him. For what someone receives as a gift, he cannot give to others as from his own person. But He breathed upon His disciples, saying: “Receive the Holy Spirit.” This is why also Paul, writing to the Romans, says: “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this one does not belong to Him.” All these things pertain to theology. Let us therefore also turn to the good pleasure (He has) toward us. For the same words declare at once the supreme excellence of theology and the charity of condescension: “You are my beloved Son.” This expression, the Father applied to the head of our race, to the incarnate Word, to the second Adam as a divine seed,

from which springs the gift of filial adoption, this (seed) also of whom John, writing to the faithful, said: “He who is born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, for he is born of God.” It is therefore us whom He called sons in Jesus, those who were enemies, adversaries, rebels, and who were led, as not even slaves would be, but who willingly walked toward the tyranny of the Slanderer and the devils. Yet He did not simply name us sons, but also beloved, we who deserved only hatred and the complete aversion of His face; those who had corrupted and made contemptible the image of Him who created them; those who were only impure and detestable; those who were defiled by this stain hard to wash away, sin; and who had fallen into the worst ugliness; if anyone had looked at them, they would have been an abomination to him: yet it is these whom He loved. And, astonishingly, it is not as one who pities, but as one who delights, and as one who, because of a more beautiful and lovable action, is wholly satisfied. And because this pleased Him, immediately, in the object of His delight, He changed and transformed the one filled with passions, washing him in the waters, clothing him with the garment of incorruptibility, adorning him with the Spirit, anointing him with chrism, and placing upon him the spiritual fragrance, so that, according to the word of Paul: “We may be holy and without blemish”, there may exist in them neither stain, nor wrinkle, nor anything like all these things that destroy this true beauty.

Let us keep this in mind: The Word, the only Son of God, willed to partake in our existence and to be called the Son of Man, so that we might be named sons of God, and that He might fulfill the promise made to the fathers and to the descendants of Abraham, namely: “He will bless all nations”, and that by His descent He might equip us for the impracticable and inaccessible ascent that leads to heaven, the one that the prophet Amos also divinely and very clearly foretold, saying: “He who has built His ascent to heaven and has established His promise on earth.” But this same thing, Matthew and Luke indicated clearly when they were inspired by the Holy Spirit. For when Matthew wished to recount the birth according to the flesh of our Savior, he began the genealogy with Abraham, and through David he descended to Jesus; while Luke says that He came to the Jordan, having completed thirty years in His bodily stature, He who is without age or time as God, and He received baptism in our place, and then he placed the genealogy, speaking thus: “And Jesus, when He began, was about thirty years old, and was, as was supposed, the son of

Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat." And he proceeded in order, from the most recent to the fathers of old, finally saying: "The son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God." It is evident that these two genealogies show both our origin according to the flesh—the one that (proceeds) from those who are earlier, descending to those who are recent—and, because of the charity proper to the Word of God, the spiritual birth, which He gave us in exchange by baptism in His place—the one that passes and ascends from the recent to the earlier and makes sons of Adam into sons of God. Such are the gates of heaven that Christ has opened, those that had been closed by Adam, from which nothing from above descended to us; but the barrier of sin stood in the way and separated us from familiarity with God, as He also says through the prophet: "Are not your sins a separation between Me and you?" But now, it is as if the great gate were opened, and immediately heaven became visible and unfolded, and all at once the torrent of all good things descended to us: the word of the Father, the call of the Son, the descent of the Spirit. These are the things that Jesus drew to Himself, sending them to us, He the fullness, we the needy. For how is He not the fullness, He of whom we have seen the glory, glory as of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth?

But why should He not arrange such a beginning for our race, He the head, who is the mediator between God and men, because of His charity? And for this reason He stood in the midst of the waters of the river, so that those who leaned toward an earthly life and were led into the abysses of sin, He might lift them up through the water and send them upward to the heights by the Spirit, once they had gained the lightness and elevation that comes from above, by passing through the fire here below, that is, by the trial of fire.

But why does He come to baptism at the age of thirty? To show that the new spiritual birth regenerates men who have become adults in spiritual age. For thus the first man had been formed as an adult and had been placed in Paradise at once as an adult, had received commandments and laws, and had been entrusted with the cultivation and guardianship of Paradise—for childhood and growth corresponding to ages, after the expulsion from Paradise, followed marital union and the life that comes by generation and corruption—thus, then, what was of the first formation resembles what is of the new reformation; or rather, it is even better and more

sublime. But at the same time, by the triple perfection found in the three tens of the thirty years, He showed that on the Jordan is revealed the perfect mystery of the Trinity, of the one Divinity known in the three perfect hypostases; by which also must be accomplished the baptism in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit.

But while I proclaim these things publicly, I am astonished, I who approach the greatness of this limitless condescension. For He who, in the time of Jesus, son of Nun, was carried in the ark typologically, and who was prefigured by the golden chest containing the manna and by the rod of Aaron that blossomed after being dry, and who cut off and held back the waters of the Jordan, and made the twelve tribes of Israel cross as on dry land, so much so that the waters in some way feared and trembled, and for this stood still and rose up, though they descended from upstream, in a mass thrown back a great distance, as the sacred book says—now, He having become incarnate and become visible in truth and no longer by figure and signs, plunged His head into the torrent of the waters and stood under (the waters), so as to lift us up together with Him, we who were plunged into the abyss of sin. This is the meaning of the fact that John, all trembling, withdrew his hand from the head of Emmanuel, this head, yes, which now, in a spiritual manner, made the waters turn back: by holding back the current and the torrent of impure pleasures, and these waves of sin, which had swelled and risen, by the evangelical life, dissipated into foam. But when he cried out: “I need to be baptized by You, and You come to me?” and thought that one cannot approach the divinity of Jesus, He, the wise guide of our salvation, refused: “Let it be so now.” "Do not run," He said, "ahead of the limits of the Economy, O forerunner messenger; for I now traverse the conditions of voluntary abasement," He said; "and I come to be counted among those baptized by you, while I inaugurate another baptism, the one that is more perfect. As for what you said: 'I have need,' you speak truly."

Thus, just as it was for us and not for Himself that He received this baptism, He who, for our sake, took upon Himself all these things to suffer; so too, for us, He was tempted, though He had no need of temptation, He who committed no sin and in whose mouth no deceit was found. But on the other hand, straightening the weakness of our nature and the human race, He meets the Slanderer and opens for us the stadium for combat against him. Thus when He approaches him and is

overthrown and stripped of the strength that militated against us and already begins to be paralyzed, he then becomes easy to subdue for those who struggle against him. Therefore, just as the fact that He was voluntarily tempted becomes for us a help, we who are weak; this is what Paul says in writing to the Hebrews: “For because He Himself suffered when tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted.” For by the fact that He was tempted, He showed His power. And this temptation of hunger, like the others, all those against which there is no accusation of sin, He took them voluntarily upon Himself; having accepted for a time the limits of nature, those that arise by their own proper course, and He was not driven toward these things by any necessity; for it is as a model and for our instruction that such things took place; this is clear from what was said earlier, for it is written: “He was led into the wilderness by the Spirit.” Was it then involuntarily that He was led and carried, whereas we ourselves do not suffer it, since we walk toward what must be executed by the exercise of our free will? But what I have just said was presented long ago for our instruction and as a preamble of warning, when we have been deemed worthy of divine baptism: let us no longer conduct ourselves, but let us give ourselves spiritual laws and be directed by them, living a certain spiritual life and strengthening ourselves against the assaults of the Slanderer, among which are the crowns and the kingdom of heaven and the feast with the angels and the life that is equal to their way of life.

This banquet and this spiritual table, He has set them for us today, He who nourishes our souls, the God who has manifested Himself to the world, who dwells in unapproachable light and who has shone upon human life when it was near its setting. Then with what repayments shall we repay the giver of such goods? Let the Baptist once more run ahead and say: “He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise!” Why then do we, on this feast, when we see our table overflowing with varied dishes, not share with those who need this surplus, though we destine it all to a belly that cannot be satisfied? Why, when we parade in rich and very costly garments, made especially for beauty and not for utility, do we not protect a brother from the cold that pierces him? And how do we not lie, saying: "We celebrate the manifestation of the divine light," if we ourselves do not perform a work of light; but even those near us we reject and seize, and those who have deserved nothing of it we lead to prison and cover with insults, contempt, and disgrace, they who have been fashioned from the same clay

and enriched with the same Spirit of the new creation? For just as if someone, when the sun shines purely upon all the earth, closes his house, so that nowhere does he let the light enter, and places in darkness and full shadow what is inside, so too he who surrounds himself with evil works and prevents all entry to the divine light is still a wretched and anguished soul, sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, who perceives nothing of the splendors of the sun of justice; how will he who has not experienced this obey Paul, who warns him, saying: “For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk, then, as children of light! Now the fruit of light consists in all goodness, justice, and truth, discerning what is pleasing to the Lord; and take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.” For by doing these things ourselves, we shall be made partakers of the glory here below and also of the Theophany to come; may we be worthy of it, by the grace and charity of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit belong all glory, honor, and power, now and always, and unto the ages of ages! Amen!

## HOMILY 39 ON FASTING: THE SECOND HOMILY. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Moses, the servant of God, when the children of Israel went out to battle, commanded the priest to speak thus, saying what would fill the troops with courage and unwavering resolve: “Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Let not your heart faint, fear not, do not be crushed, do not turn away, for the Lord your God goes before you to fight alongside you against your enemies and to save you” (Deut. 20:3-4). If, then, against flesh and blood, he armed soldiers and arrayed them against men of their own race, being for them a guardian god, standing as their surety—how much more may we hope to make even greater promises than these, when we send you forth, O spiritual troops, through fasting, arrayed for spiritual combat against invisible enemies? For “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). O divine and truly noble battle line! It arms us, who are bound to the dust, against the aerial spirits of darkness and those forces worse than all, which Paul called Principalities and Powers—those who rebelled with the Slanderer, who were created in the beginning in a state of goodness and for good by the Creator, and were established in principality and angelic order. But they willingly turned their gaze away from the contemplation of heavenly things and the luminous perfection, and were afflicted with the disease of pride, alongside him who, as it is written, “lifted his heel against the Lord Almighty” (Job 15:25). By their own will, they blinded their spiritual eye and found themselves in darkness. For whoever willingly turns his eye from the light obviously brings darkness upon himself. Now, the Apostle called them Principalities and Powers—not because the demons have any principality or power over us, God forbid! How could they? Those who could not even take refuge in the swine unless Jesus, the Savior God, permitted it (as written in the Gospels, Matt. 8:31-32)—did they not go there only because they had fallen from the Principality and Power in which they had been established by God?

It is indeed so. Listen to the sacred books on this matter, which speak thus: “The angels who did not keep their Principality but abandoned their own dwelling, He has kept in eternal chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (Jude

6). For the terrible day of judgment awaits them, along with the flame of unending and unquenchable torment, as it is said: “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). Thus, they have no Principality, except perhaps that, having the Slanderer as their chief—he who first sinned and incited rebellion—they have aligned themselves under him in a disordered and dark array, dwelling in the expanse of the air and wandering according to their former nature in the portion allotted to them, freed from the heavy opacity of earthly things. For this reason, Jesus, though there were many kinds of punishment, willingly ascended the Cross to destroy their Principality in the air, from which, like conquerors of a city’s citadel, they had oppressed and enslaved mankind. And He was exalted even in His suffering, so that for us, for whose sake the Cross came, He might exalt us and draw us to Himself, openly showing that even in the suffering of voluntary humiliation, He remained great and is exalted not in one dimension alone but extended in four directions—for does not the Cross have four sides?—thus clearly demonstrating that He is God, surpassing all and encompassing all in Himself. So Paul, explaining the mystery of the Cross in writing to the Ephesians, said: “That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, length, depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge” (Eph. 3:18-19).

What then, someone might say? Are the demons, who possess nothing, called rulers of the world? Not as if they had power over heaven, earth, and all that is in them—for that is the visible world—but as if they had power over the evil thoughts of this world and the spread of pleasures, through which they possess and enslave those who live in this world. For those who were first affected by malice and, as it were, sowed its seed are rightly their chiefs and are called and reckoned as their sovereigns and kings. Now, that Scripture habitually gives the name “world” to the evil thoughts in the world, take John the Theologian, who says: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and its lusts; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15-17). And again: “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19). This was not said earlier about the visible works, good and beautiful, which God made very good (as we hear

Moses write, Gen. 1:31), and which are in no way evil. In accordance with this view, our Savior also said in the Gospel to His apostles: “If you were of the world, the world would love its own” (John 15:19). Though they too were part of the world by nature, as we are, it is clear that because they were strangers to these evil thoughts—to which those who are content with worldly and ephemeral things are enslaved—He told them they were not of the world.

Similarly, when Paul calls the demons “rulers of the world,” he immediately qualifies this by adding “of this darkness”, as if to say: I call them rulers of the world only in relation to what holds the darkness and evil spread in the world. For whatever is separated from God, the true light, is properly called darkness. That is why he wrote to the Thessalonians: “We are not of the night nor of darkness” (1 Thess. 5:5). And he also calls these same demons “spiritual forces of evil”, declaring that though they were among the intelligent spirits and of the same nature, they were afflicted with this evil, so that this disease became their very name. That is why, when we pray, we say: “Deliver us from the Evil One” (Matt. 6:13), naming Satan “the Evil One,” as the commander and chief of the evil host. But “in the heavenly places” has a double explanation. Some say that Scripture often calls the air “heaven,” as it also speaks of “the birds of heaven” (Matt. 6:26). Thus, they affirm that “in the heavenly places” means “in the regions of the air”. Moreover, we have said before that these evil spirits mostly dwell in the air. So Paul says of the Slanderer: “According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).

Others, less versed in divine Scripture and not grasping its expressions, respond to this explanation by daring to distort the word, audaciously writing “in the regions below the heavens” instead of “in the heavenly places”. By this impious fiction, they conceal their own negligence and ignorance, for when they say “below the heavens”, we have every reason to understand it as “the air”. But others understand “heavenly things” in this way: they say that our struggle is against the spiritual forces of evil—not in vain, nor in general, nor in random actions, but in heavenly things. For the entire conflict lies in these things, since, on the one hand, we strive to ascend to the heavenly reward through virtuous conduct and good deeds, while on the other, those who rise against us and obstruct us, through the lightness of unclean pleasures, drag our faces downward and lead us to the abyss and

destruction. The demons, being envious by nature and afflicted with jealousy and other evils, find it extremely painful and gnash their teeth when they see us hastening and running toward that height from which they fell because of the malice that entered them. We accept both these explanations because they align with the goal of piety. For the words of the Spirit are rich in divine meanings and have been understood in many ways. We reject only one: that stupid invention of falsification.

It is against such adversaries that Christ has arrayed us through fasting—I mean against the Slanderer and the confederation of the evil power of demons. He is called the Slanderer because he was the first to lie, slander, and accuse God's law and command, inciting Eve to disobedience by saying: "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4-5). O, the worst of all insolence! He attributes to God the jealousy from which he himself suffers, claiming that the prohibition to eat from the tree was mere envy—envy indeed, according to the Slanderer's deceitful fiction, to deprive them of participation in and nourishment from Him who could then fill them with good things. Again, because we ate improperly and blasphemously, our General arms us against him through fasting. For if Adam had fasted when he should have, abstaining from the tree's fruit, we would not now need this fast. But just as a skilled physician, when food has been taken improperly and caused illness in the body, purges it by withholding harmful nourishment and gradually removes the causes of the disease, so fasting, like a medicine, has come to us. Through wise and intelligent abstinence, it purifies the passions that arose from untimely eating, heals, restores strength little by little, brings us back to health and proper vigor, and arms us against the demons.

In this consists God's supreme love and care for us. Just as parents rejoice when their own sons join strong men who fight the adversary and distinguish themselves with victory and glorious triumphs, so God, more than any father, in His mercy toward us during this long interim, used the jealousy of the Slanderer and the demons—who had sunk to such depths of wickedness—and permitted this struggle. His purpose was to punish the arrogance of these beings, born of pride, to make us appear more glorious and illustrious with crowns, to proclaim us as those who have fought, and to grant us, as laborers and strugglers, a share in the delights

of eternal blessings. In former times, when we were in an imperfect and diseased state, fasting was applied to us like a medicine. For Moses commanded, saying: "The tenth day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement; it shall be holy to you, and you shall afflict your souls" (Lev. 23:27). Because it was a day of atonement and pardon, they accepted the affliction of fasting, just as a physician might tell those suffering from illness to endure the pain of an incision or cauterization for the sake of healing. But now that we have attained a more perfect state of life, fasting has been instituted and commanded for us by the great God and our Savior Christ as a training for athletes and a preparation for battle. What does He say? "When you fast, anoint your head" (Matt. 6:17). Truly, one who strips for wrestling is anointed entirely, but because this is not a bodily but a wholly spiritual struggle, He does not command—by these words of the Spirit—that any other part of the body be anointed with this divine unction except the head, the highest place of the soul. As Qohelet says: "The wise man's eyes are in his head" (Eccl. 2:14). But he who is thus anointed, who engages with his enemies and overcomes, will afterward also wash his face, having the eye of his intellect pure and luminous from contemplating heavenly things.

That is why, after saying "anoint your head", He adds: "and wash your face". So rejoice, with your gaze fixed on heaven, and rise to this sublime and lofty fast. Do not groan before it, do not bow toward the earth, nor mourn or grieve over the shrinking and emptiness of your belly. For it is the nature of four-footed beasts to be turned toward the belly, not of rational man, created in God's image, who alone among living beings can easily fix his gaze on heaven. Listen to Paul, who legislates, saying: "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). Take up the divine book in your hands; review the narratives of the ancients, the lives of the heroes who were praised: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job. Like a skilled painter, imitate the icon of their virtue. Learn how they lived chastely with their wives, how they raised their sons in the love of God, how they practiced hospitality, even receiving angels in their homes (Gen. 18). When they grew rich, it was not for themselves but for their kin, sharing their gifts to relieve the needy. They were in no way attached to gold, and they turned their faces from avarice as from a defilement. One of them, laden with gifts by someone, said: "I have lifted my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the

Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing from a thread to a sandal strap, lest you say, “I have made Abram rich” (Gen. 14:22-23). Another, when someone thought he was being punished for sin and accused him of it, was not proud but said: “If I have touched a bribe, let me sow, and others eat. Or if I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, or because my hand had gained much—do we not see the sun rise and set, the moon wane and complete its course? For it is not in their power” (Job 31:7-8, 25-26). Here I see exact philosophy and a mind that scorns visible joys. “The fair color of gold,” he says, “does not attract me, nor am I overwhelmed by the shining brightness of silver, nor am I dismayed in my spirit. For I have looked to the sun and the moon—things of such beauty, shining far brighter than gold or silver—and I have seen that one disappears, and the other, after waxing, wanes and gradually comes to its end and vanishes, and it is not in their power. For it is not in their power to give light or withhold it, but there is Another who illumines us with the lamp that comes from them, the One who made them and brought them from nothingness. This has been a lesson to me: not to regard the fleeting flower of riches that fades and falls in an instant.” So hear the reason I used wealth: “If I have eaten my bread alone and not shared it with the orphan; if from my youth I have reared him as a father, and from my mother’s womb I have guided him; if I have seen a naked man perishing and not covered him, or the weak who did not bless me; if the loins of the poor have not been warmed with the fleece of my lambs; or if I have raised my hand against the orphan, trusting in my many supporters—then let my shoulder fall from its socket, and my arm be broken at the elbow” (Job 31:17-22). He also says: “The stranger did not lodge outside, for I opened my doors to the traveler” (Job 31:32). And for many other righteous deeds, he believed that they disperse wealth and please God.

If now we are truly zealous for these things, let us fast not only in body but also in spirit. For what advantage is it to me if you hunger, yet do not send what is superfluous in food to the belly of the hungry? What profit is bodily fasting if you do not nourish your soul with the teachings of divine words, with exhortations, and with historical narratives—among which we must also find remedies and medicines suitable for women, as well as examples of virtue. For here the stadium is open equally to men and women. And not to stray far from our subject, let us see what covenant of love for wisdom Moses leaves us in the book of Exodus

regarding these fasting women. When he described in detail the construction of the tabernacle, he said of Bezalel, the chief craftsman, that God had filled him with wisdom and understanding, and that he made the bronze basin and its base from the mirrors of the women who fasted, those who fasted at the door of the tabernacle of witness (Exod. 38:8). See to what height of virtue fasting purifies and elevates them. For not only did they abstain from food, but they also sat at the door of the tabernacle out of love for God, sanctifying their minds, as it were, and fasting from all worldly care. Contemplating the things that are beautiful in God's sight (as it is written) and radiant with the beauty of their souls, they cast away from themselves the mirrors made for bodily faces, proclaiming by this action that the qualities of inner beauty were theirs. They despised the fading beauty that comes from without—that which, through colors, can deceive and delude the eyes, like the images or portraits that painters daub on tablets. But consider also the commandment of the Spirit, which is that of a true sage. He commanded that a basin be made from these mirrors, to show clearly that to those who demonstrated such great virtue and offered such a gift, He gave washing and the remission of sins as a reward.

Thus, good fasting, like a spiritual mirror, reveals the stains of the soul and teaches us to care about cleansing them. If, then, those who received the provisional law of Moses—which had just delivered them from Egyptian and barbarous customs—fasted in so excellent and spiritual a manner because of the excellence of the promise, how much more should you, O women who fill the church, whose head is Christ, who have been given the law of the Gospel and have learned the heavenly laws of the God who descended to earth solely to proclaim them—how much more should you surpass them beyond measure? Fast, then, with a spirit above the world, despise all bodily adornment, and establish in your souls the ornament of virtues. For you have a more real basin: the hands of the poor. Deposit your bronze there and wash your souls. Be diligent in houses of prayer and attentive to "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Col. 3:16). For if you fast thus, you will also leave behind for your children your example as a written law. Let us recall and declare in every way that our fathers fasted in this manner. Thus, we will fulfill the law of our fathers, and, things being so, they will follow you and walk with you—rewards of this good upbringing. Moreover, God will be propitious and merciful to them all their lives, rewarding them for the good and worthy teaching they received with

what is greater than all goods: the kingdom of heaven. May we all be made worthy of it by the grace and love of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen!

**HOMILY 40 (DELIVERED INSIDE THE HOLY BAPTISTERY ON THE EVENING OF THE BEGINNING OF THE HOLY FAST OF FORTY DAYS, WHEN WE WERE ABOUT TO PROHIBIT ENTRY INTO THE BAPTISTERY, WHICH USUALLY OCCURS EVERY SUNDAY EVENING—UNTIL THE HOLY FEAST OF EASTER AND THE RESURRECTION.)** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

All that is accomplished and carried out in the churches of God aims at one sole purpose: to correct us, draw us closer to what is best, and make us progress upward—whether it be a feast, a fast, or anything else of this kind. For in all these things, there is the remembrance of a divine blessing bestowed upon us, namely, that we have become debtors, so that each of us, reflecting on it, may say: "What shall I render to the Lord for all that He has given me?" (Ps. 116:12). It is with this thought that, recalling the night when our Lord and God Jesus Christ rose from the dead, we enter this venerable dwelling every Sunday with psalms, supplications, and prayers. We do this so that, contemplating this fountain of living waters—where, after being buried with the Emmanuel through a triple immersion, we rose again with Him—we may praise the One who called us. For on one hand, we have put off the old man (Eph. 4:22), and on the other, we have clothed ourselves with the incorruptible stature, which is not overcome by age, does not grow old, and leads to endless life.

And now, with the same thought, we wish to keep you away for a time from this sacred entry, seeking to engrave more clearly in your souls, as upon a pillar, the reason why we have seen the invisible and grasped the ungraspable. And what is this reason? It is the blood of God incarnate—truly precious and dear blood, sufficient to redeem the entire world enslaved by sin. For we hear Paul say: "Christ entered once for all into the Holy of Holies by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12). And we learn that we have full freedom to enter the Holy of Holies with the blood of Jesus, for He inaugurated a new and living way for us. Since, then, it is to praise the blood of Christ poured out abundantly for us—to drown and wash away every stain and defilement—that we undertake these forty days as people redeemed at so great a price, no longer living for ourselves but for Him who died and rose for us (2 Cor. 5:15), we dare to distance ourselves somewhat from this entry. We do this so that on the very day this blood was shed,

when Christ was sacrificed for us as the Passover, we may return with Him, ascending with Him as He ascends to heaven. Indeed, Paul, that mystical and loud-voiced trumpet of the Church, who reveals the depths of the Spirit as far as possible, cries out: “Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, to appear now before the face of God for us” (Heb. 9:24). Who would not marvel at the magnificence of His love and His self-emptying for us? He surpasses all by the greatness of the Father’s Wisdom, who said: “Before the hills, He brought me forth, and I rejoiced before Him at all times” (Prov. 8:25, 30). Now He appears before the face of God as extraordinary, alien, and overflowing. Yet His justification is entirely within our reach. For He appears not for Himself but for us, since He has brought us up with Him—we who were strangers to heaven, or rather unworthy even of earth, who were lost, stripped of grace, hiding from God, who through Adam heard: “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9), and who through him uttered those shame-filled words: “I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid” (Gen. 3:10).

Since, then, we have been deemed worthy of such great love and are about to enter the Holy of Holies—indeed, heaven itself—with Christ, and to appear before the face of God, let us prepare ourselves with all our strength through good works. Let us purify ourselves in advance for that day when there is the Victim, the Blood, the water from His side, the choosing of the beloved, the Resurrection, the anointing, the hope of rebirth—when there is an entire torrent of good, from which we have not only drunk but also been intoxicated, due to the abundance of its immeasurable flow: “They will be intoxicated with the richness of Your house, and You will give them drink from the river of Your delights” (Ps. 36:9). Let us therefore gird ourselves in all purity, preparing for that venerable day, for which the prophet also prepares us, saying: “Be pure before the face of the Lord, for the day of the Lord is near; the Lord has prepared His sacrifice, He has consecrated His chosen ones” (Zeph. 1:7). To Him be praise forever! Amen.

**HOMILY 41 ON THE FORTY HOLY MARTYRS (THIS IS THE SECOND HOMILY. IT WAS DELIVERED AFTER THE HOMILY FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR WAS REREAD TO THE PEOPLE, AS THEY HAD REQUESTED WHEN IT WAS FIRST PRONOUNCED.)** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Amos, that astonishing and remarkable prophet, compelled to humility and sincerity, measured his smallness against God's grand and sublime call. He fled from the honor and burden of prophecy entirely, as he would later say: "I was no prophet, nor the son of a prophet, nor did I willingly take up this role" (Amos 3:8). He believed he heard the sound of a trumpet, while the breath from above, coming from the Spirit, terrified and made him tremble—or like a roaring lion, whose roar strikes fear in those who hear it, blending caution and dread. He said: "If a trumpet sounds in the city, will the people not tremble? If a lion roars, who will not fear? If the Lord God speaks, who will not prophesy?" (Amos 3:6, 8).

I, too, though I wish to remain silent at this moment, feel a sentiment akin to this prophet's. I say: "Since the Forty Martyrs have glorified and honored this solemn occasion, who could remain silent? Who would not dance in spirit when illuminated by their heroic deeds and exploits?" Just as their conduct and life—when they lived in the flesh, waged these battles, were honored in every way, led the assault at the front lines, and inspired courage in their fellow soldiers—this spectacle of bravery and valor stands as proof. So now, as if on a podium, they appear to uphold the magnificent struggle of martyrdom. They embolden the weak to fight alongside them in similar circumstances, and they lift up those like me, who lack eloquence, to praise them. They seem to say to me: "Do not imagine, O excellent one, that all debt of praise for us is discharged because you have taken the trouble to deliver a homily about us. You have not yet given forty eulogies! For it is not because we fought together the sacred battle of martyrdom that you may think we shared only one martyrdom and not many. The arena of struggle was common, as was our choice to suffer for Christ. But each of us proved his constancy personally, and we were not united all at once in what provoked our sufferings—yet we suffered no less for it. Because we were yoked together and deemed worthy to suffer as one, abundant words and thoughts now offer you ample reason to speak."

Just as the river that flows from Eden to water Paradise divides into four branches (Gen. 2:10) and fills those four great rivers, so too we, like a source overflowing with unceasing blessings, flow forth as forty rivers from the forty-day fast—the fast that abundantly irrigates God's spiritual Paradise, which we call the Church. Having been instructed during these holy days, we have abstained from every passion, mortified our earthly members, and adorned ourselves with the martyrs' crowns. Carried on even mightier currents, we have landed in the depths of your mind. Listen only to him who proclaims in sorrow: "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Ps. 81:11). Thus, having heard and rightly understood these and similar words from the holy martyrs, how could I "not draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation" (Is. 12:3), as the prophet Isaiah says? "And in that day, you will say: 'Give thanks to the Lord, proclaim His name, make known His deeds among the nations'" (Is. 12:4). Remember that it is through the endurance of these martyrs—both bodily and beyond the flesh—that His name is exalted: "Glorify the name of the Lord, for He has done great things; declare it throughout all the earth" (Is. 12:5).

But as I speak and begin to draw a little from such drink, I see the praise of these spiritual heroes gushing forth in abundance. I am moved to say what a wise man once said: "I said, 'I will water my garden and drench my flower beds,' but behold, my channel became a river, and my river, a sea" (Sir. 24:31-32). Who, then, could restrain such a flood alone? Come, then, and help me in these praises! As we gather the diverse and manifold exploits of the martyrs like flowers, let us weave from them all a single, many-splendored crown. How is it that these forty were not swayed by the manifold bonds of material allure pulling them downward? How did they not cling to their ancestral land—that earth so sweet to men—nor turn their deeds and names toward their forefathers (a thing even sweeter than homeland)? How did they not succumb to the ties of marriage, whose love is said to grow fiercer with distance? Yet none of them preferred their children, nor clung jealously to their youth. Instead, they likened brothers and all fleshly kinship to withered leaves falling in their season. Nor did fear penetrate their unconquered souls. For their leader was Christ, who said to His Father concerning those who believe in Him: "As You, Father, are in Me and I in You, so may they be one in Us" (Jn. 17:21). Thus, their strength was united in the swiftness of their resolve: one speech,

one vision, one march, one unwavering stance before the tribunal's judgment seat—before the sundering of soul and body. Confidence, valor, relentlessness, inflexibility in the face of riots, fearlessness before threats, eagerness for torments—even rushing to meet new tortures. They mocked all things, for they had near them the means to endure every trial, even if each needed a second body. The belt of glory and rewards for service after death, the honors from earthly rulers—these they deemed contemptible, a drunkard's dream. For the entire spirit of these athletes of faith embraced beforehand the heroism of the heavenly kingdom. They considered all earthly things mortal, fixing their hopes on endless life. Already in spirit, they dwelt above. And though their bodies remained to fight, their steadfastness made them like an impregnable fortress built of unshakable stones, rising to the heights. Their judge, crafty and wicked in his schemes, encircled them on all sides to terrify their lofty, unshaken spirits. Like one setting traps, he alternately flattered them with deceitful words and frightened them with threats. Finally, seeing all efforts vain and no avenue left, he dismissed them. As a new torment was prepared, he observed the biting north wind and reasoned it would freeze all moisture and stifle living breath, while warmth fled into the depths. He ordered these valiant men to be cast naked into a nearby frozen pond.

Commanded to suffer there all night—or rather, to be buried alive in icy waters—their peril was laid bare. Yet they passed that night of torment as if in delight, exhorting one another with psalms and praises, multiplying their joy. I omit their scorn for the warm bath placed nearby to entice them—a bath that could spare them the struggle if they chose bodily life. I also pass over the one who, like Matthew sitting at the tax collector's house, was suddenly called by Jesus. Another athlete stepped forward voluntarily to take the place of the one who faltered. But one thing above all fills me with wonder: how wisely He who directs our salvation allowed this, so that through this ordeal, the forty martyrs might remain complete. We hear David and the three youths praise the Lord, summoning all creation to join their hymn (Ps. 148; Dan. 3:57-81). They command heaven and earth, sun and moon, fire and water, animals and wild beasts to bless their Maker—not that these irrational creatures might raise voices, but that we, in spirit, might unite them in harmony and gather their praise for our needs. So too in the martyrs' struggles. Many were tortured by fire, yet they overcame the flames—whether by extinguishing them or enduring them as if cold. Thus, fire and heat blessed the

Lord, conquered by their endurance. Others were drowned in seas or rivers, weighted with stones, yet they surfaced like light bodies, and the waters blessed the Lord. Even animals blessed Him when set as food before martyrs. But cold, frost, snow, and ice had yet to bless their Creator through martyrdom—until these forty martyrs fulfilled this in abundance. Honoring their contest, Christ, the Orchestrator of struggles, now plunges us into the surging sea while the earth is parched by fire and seeds wither. Let us, then, honor these victors and the God who placed the struggle in repentance and progress.

Let us match their endurance in cold with ascetic discipline, quenching passions, exchanging purity for fornication. Let us clothe the naked, as they stood unclothed. If you feel no shame for Christ, who stood naked for you, blush for the martyrs who fought naked for Him. Learn hope for the life to come while still in this corrupt world. When you feast, possess, or dress, remember: what exceeds necessity is not yours. Hear Paul: "Having food and clothing, let us be content. If our hope is in this life alone, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Tim. 6:8). See how even reflecting on the martyrs' deeds—let alone speaking of them zealously—demands abundant virtue from us! Shall I end here and omit the valiant tale of that God-loving mother? Rather, shall I deprive your pious ears of this noble account? Even if I wished to, this courageous woman would compel me. I see her now, bearing her son on her shoulders—this woman, so manly in spirit, loving her son yet mastering nature's weakness. She ran after the donkey and cried in anguish: "I fear God, who knows hearts, saw in me fleshly thoughts or womanly tears lacking vigor. Lest He spared my son to soothe my frailty while the others passed through fire at their Judge's command—how could I bear this wreck? If the mothers of those who fought alongside my son already rejoice in heaven, my child still lies on earth. Do not reject my offering, O Lord, as You did Cain's (Gen. 4:5). For if I offered it imperfectly, I did not waver like him. I give my son wholly, unreservedly, declaring him Yours. Behold, I place him on the donkey, as Isaac was laid on the wood (Gen. 22:9). I seized him running, for I ran knowingly, envying Paul's race (Phil. 3:12). Repay me at the resurrection with the goat You gave us—Your Son, the Lamb, in the thicket of Sabeq (Gen. 22:13), as a sin offering. For Sabeq is the Holy Cross, the wood of remission and pardon."

Such were the words, deeds, and thoughts of this brave mother. Let all mothers emulate her, feeling nothing alien to piety when their sons labor for God. If a son fasts, let his mother spur him with wise and fervent exhortation—not mourning his pallor. Let her not falter at his suffering but rejoice if she finds him steadfast in nightly prayers. And you, fathers, keep your sons from the pernicious path of spectacles—horse races, lewd songs, and mimes. Exhort and coax them away from corruption, for youth is like malleable clay, imprinted early with virtue or vice. Let us pray that the struggles and triumphs of these martyrs be ever before us, that in similar trials we may not abandon truth, nor be swayed by passions, but live in fear and trembling, worthy of the kingdom of heaven—through the grace and love of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory, honor, and power, now and forever. Amen.

## HOMILY 42 SECOND CATECHETICAL HOMILY. DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK. TABLE OF CONTENTS

When I look upon this spiritual assembly and consider that the nature of the listeners is not of one kind but varied, I am perplexed within myself. On the one hand, if I address the ears of those who do not partake in the mysteries, I turn my breast with my hand and offer it to those who are growing, I mean the teaching that pours forth simple words like milk. On the other hand, if I address those who are already initiated, those who today have brought us from one year to the next with impoverished ears, I come to speak also of more solid nourishment, of that which has the value of bread and solid food, which truly suits those who grow in spiritual stature and become adolescents. For when something of this sort is said, we can scarcely persuade those who are in such dispositions that our arrival holds any worth, nor our gathering here. So much so that what I bring in words is minimal and regarded by them as mediocre; they neglect and openly despise it, boasting of their negligence and contempt for whoever rises, listens, and hears divine things. They consider this coming to us as a mockery, existing only for show. But if indeed I lift my spirit again a little to the height of the mystery—for this is what is proposed today for teaching and expression—I then perceive no difference among the listeners. I am now in astonishment, as if outside my body, and I fly toward what is above, while I remain below in the misery of a bad life and still need great purification. For the light of theology draws me to itself, as does the incomprehensible beauty that comes from there, and it intoxicates me with a blessed drunkenness, chaste and pure, so that what is said no longer depends on my judgment but on that breath which comes from above, because truly the Spirit blows where it wills, as the Sacred Book says.

What then must be done? Fix the eye on the contemplation above and pass completely over in silence what is below? But I fear that the one being catechized may flee the splendor of the word, unable to bear the sight of its rays, and that I myself may need a veil—a word capable of concealing the elevation of thoughts, like Moses descending from the mountain. His face shone after his conversation with God, and he could not be seen by the children of Israel, so he needed that veil. And so? Must we forcibly withdraw our spirit from what is too lofty? But if we do this, we will again be those who cry from the earth and speak into the air, as it is

said of some by Isaiah and the Apostle. We will therefore go neither this way nor that but will walk a middle path, sometimes skimming the hidden nature of thoughts, sometimes stepping back from what is too deep and setting off lightly, as if tossed at the edge of a ship and adjusted toward a newly set course. For changing the word with skill and wisdom comes to us from the teaching of the Apostle, since Paul himself, writing to the Galatians, says: "I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone." Likewise, the prophet Ezekiel—or rather, the one who spoke through him—showed this same thing very mysteriously when he commanded those who exercise the priesthood: "Inside the sanctuary, they shall remove the sacred robe; outside, they shall put on another garment over their clothing when they go out to the people." He also says: "Let them put on other garments when they touch the people," and again: "When they go out to the outer court to the people, they shall remove the robes in which they minister and leave them in the holy chambers, and put on other garments, so as not to sanctify the people with their robes." He says this not out of envy toward the people regarding sanctification—for what reason for envy could there be toward God, who, out of His abundant and overflowing goodness, has given us both being and well-being—but so that it may not be harmful for us if He pours out His goodness beyond measure, because we cannot truly bear with our eyes any ray of the sun. If we were to fix our pupils directly upon it and try to see it whole, we would lose even what we can see. That He does this out of pity for our souls is ready to be understood from the sacred books, which say: "And God spoke to Moses, saying: 'Go down and warn the people, lest they approach God to gaze and many of them perish. And let the priests who come near to the Lord God consecrate themselves, lest the Lord break out against them.'" Thus, according to the notification of these divine words, the same words or thoughts are not to be used for everyone, nor is it safe for all who hear to rise to the same contemplation. Rather, they must know the profitable limit of ignorance and understanding, so that what each comes to possess, they possess in proportion to their preparation and purification. This is why Paul, writing to some, said: "If anyone thinks they are a prophet or spiritual, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, let them not recognize it."

After these things have been discerned, I am confident in approaching the ministry of the word of faith, for what has been entrusted to me by Him who gave it is not a

spirit of fear but of power, love, and self-control, as the Apostle says. Those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, and those who, following them, governed the Catholic and Apostolic Church, have taught us to believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: a mystery both new and old—new in that it is daily understood and known, renewed in us by partial understandings so that we may retain what we have grasped (though it is infinite, and we will again be far removed from it), and old because it is before all ages and time. Thus, Paul, in accordance with the revelation of the mystery hidden for eternal ages, also preached it as what was from the beginning, hidden and made known by what was revealed at the end, though it existed before, silent and concealed.

When I say "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," understand me to mean one essence and divinity in three hypostases. For the Father is not from another, nor is He by generation in what He is. The Son, shining forth from the Father by generation, is also in all time—not born in time and at the end, but existing with the Father in all time. For if there were a time, or even a moment in all eternity, when the Son was not, then in that time the Father would not truly be Father, being then without a son. Moreover, if the Son is the Word of the Father, His wisdom and His power—for we hear John cry out: "In the beginning was the Word," and Paul preach that "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God"—how is it not impious to devise human fictions in thought, as if there were a span of time during which the Father would be without the Word, wisdom, or power? Therefore, the Father is in all time the Father of the Son, who is in all time, and it is blasphemy to say, as Arius foolishly did, that there was a time when the Son was not. For if, according to Paul, He is the radiance and imprint of the Father’s glory and the hypostasis of the Father, and the Father made all ages through Him, where shall we find the time of these impious ones when they say the Son was not, if the Son is the author of the ages, in which is included the "when" when it has a temporal meaning? Therefore, according to your words, if the Son came into being in time and was not in all time, He is not begotten but made by the Father. For being born in time is proper to bodies, from births that flow, come into being, and die, but to the incorporeal nature, removed from all, this is foreign. For while the Father is essential intelligence, it is eternally and impassibly that He has begotten the Word from His own essence—a living and hypostatic Word, not diffused in the air like our words. This is why He is also called the imprint of the Father’s hypostasis. For just as our

word, when it proceeds from the intelligence within us, imprints the thought in the heart, so truly the Word of God, like an imprint and seal, shows itself not different in the Father Himself. This is why in the Gospels He rightly proclaimed: "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me," and: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." For "He has seen me" is equivalent to "He has understood me." For we attain knowledge of divine and incorporeal things by the eyes of thought, since for bodily sight, both the Father and the Son are equally invisible, as it is written: "No one has ever seen God," though it is certain that the Word appeared at the end of time, truly incarnate—not that He came as the Word, but that He became man for us without change. For He who said, "No one has ever seen God," also said: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life." Thus, the Word Himself is both visible and invisible—understood as He is, and seen as He became man. If He was in the beginning, and He was God, and He was with God, it is certain that He is begotten, not created or made, as Arius's absurdities claim. For He who was in the beginning—how could He be made in time? For between "He is" and "He will be made," the difference is great. For what is made is assigned a beginning in time, necessarily made within some span of duration or age or time, by which, before being made, it is limited. But He who is flees all imagination of such limitation. For just as "He was" concerning the Father is without end or limit—for you cannot in any way find when He was not—so also concerning the Son, when "He was" is similarly used, you can never fly and pass it by swift movements of thought. For He was God, and He was with God.

By this, the evil and atheistic opinion of Sabellius the Libyan is also destroyed. He spoke of one hypostasis of the Father and the Son, mixing and confusing the two, so that the same is called Father and also Son and Spirit, and the Trinity is adorned rather by empty names, not glorified. For if the Son was God and was with God, He was as one with another, so that they are distinct only in hypostasis—for this one is the Father, that one the Son—and they are close in divinity and identity of essence. For as the Father is God, so the Son is God; and as the Father was, so the Son was. To those to whom divinity is common and being is equal, their essence is one. For from "He is" comes the very word "essence."

Therefore, we say that the Holy Spirit is also consubstantial with the Father and the Son, for He is not created, nor is He counted among what is made. For He is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father. How could He proceed as something foreign and not of the same essence as the Father? See the force of the expression: "He proceeds" reveals, as it were, the admirable emanation of the Spirit, which, like the violence of a great river, flows abundantly and continuously from its source. That the river is of the same essence as the source—how could anyone rightly deny it? But why should I suffer, who tries to express thoughts about God, which come to us with much obscurity, and only as far as our intelligence can imagine, with poor and weak images and the poverty of our words? For I fear that someone among the listeners, hearing "source" and "river," may think of a watercourse concerning the subsisting essence, which in all time similarly and fixedly has in itself "He is"—that is, that it is, does not move, or depart from its state and fixity. For source and river, though the same in essence, are by sense one thing, though because it moves and advances, it may be thought to be figured in two different subjects, and truly no intelligent person would come to think it concerns the divine essence. For the hypostasis of the Father in no way flows into that of the Spirit, but the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him without diminution, partaking of the same essence while remaining in His own hypostasis. For the Holy Spirit Himself is also God, and this is said in many passages of the divine books. The time has come to receive clear testimony from the very entrances before the gates of the sacred Scriptures so as not to prolong a long discourse.

In Genesis, Moses wrote—for it is the first of his writings—that when Joseph was about to interpret Pharaoh’s dream, he said: "Apart from God, there is no answer of salvation for Pharaoh," making God the leader and guide of the interpretation, who knows what is hidden. And because he explained the sign of the dream’s secret, Pharaoh said to his servants, admiring the divine action through the just man: "Can we find such a man as this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" Do you see how clear the testimony is? For the one Joseph indicated—God, who would give Pharaoh the answer of salvation—is called the Spirit of God by the one who received the answer. Truly, then, the Holy Spirit is God, but He is also creator, like the Father and the Son, giving wisdom and understanding. It is written in the history of Job that Elihu said: "The Spirit of God has made me, the breath of the Almighty teaches me." Let no one, under the pretext that the Spirit is designated by the

neuter gender—neither masculine nor feminine—diminish His divinity. For we also find that the Father Himself, or rather the Holy Trinity itself, is called Spirit. For it is said in the Gospels: "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." You have, then, the Trinity—a name adorable and honorable, the preaching of piety, the sign of faith: one divinity in three hypostases, so that one and the same essence is in the divinity. For the Son is not God otherwise than the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit. As for the characteristics of the three hypostases: for the Father, it is unbegottenness and not being from another; for the Son, it is generation from the Father; for the Holy Spirit, it is procession. But we must not inquire into what generation is, nor scrutinize or search into what procession is. For it is enough for us to learn that the Son is begotten and the Holy Spirit proceeds, to have a clear, not confused, knowledge of the hypostases, not mixing the properties in the Trinity with what is one and common in the divinity. As for the "how," we will set aside the means of knowing the unbegotten, the begotten, and the proceeding. For if the very mode of generation or procession were comprehensible to us, it would not be fitting for God toward those to whom the "how" of many things, even of our own existence, escapes.

Listen to the theology of John. What does it show? After being enlightened to say: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and after showing at the same time the fact of the Word's generation without beginning or suffering, as well as the equality of honor in essence with the Father and what is proper to His hypostasis—lest anyone, imagining they have understood all, interrogate more insistently and say: "And how was the Word in the beginning, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God?"—he continued immediately: "No one has ever seen God." If, then, you have neither seen nor understood, someone might object very justly: "How have you come to say this?" "The Only Begotten Son," he says, "who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him," as if saying: "In the beginning was the Word," and the Word Himself has truly declared and revealed it. And has the "how was He" not descended to us? I turn it back and refer you to the one who said: "He was in the beginning." He Himself has told you: "What has been revealed, I have said; what is lacking, the one who is in the bosom of the Father knows it." "In the bosom" is again said due to the poverty of our words and thoughts, though it contains a bodily signification. For what "bosom" exists that does not connote something finite? Yet it signifies the

familiarity and friendship of the Son with the Father, whose essence—hidden and ineffable, escaping all created beings—He alone knows, as He Himself also says in the Gospels: "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son." The same seems to me to be said of the Spirit: "He searches even the depths of God." For it is our habit to say of one who knows the mysteries of his friend that he is in his bosom—he knows the hidden folds and the depth of his thought. And "He searches" shows a superior knowledge, such that nothing surpasses the knowledge of the Spirit as truly inscrutable and incomprehensible. Moreover, this very expression does not escape our small-mindedness: "to search" is the act of those who do not know. Yet we must reject for these words all senses that are remote and unsuitable for this essence beyond all, because we do not find the best words when announcing these divine things, and we adapt only thoughts that come as close as possible to the matter.

Hold, then, for the Trinity, as I have said, one divinity and essence in three unconfused hypostases, one principle and not three. For it is from the Father—though not after the Father—that the Son and the Holy Spirit are, when, beyond time and space, the one was begotten and the other proceeded, above all cause and reason. Moreover, when I say "Trinity," understand the Father, the Son—who, without change or transformation, became incarnate for us at the end of days—and the Holy Spirit. For the "inhumanation" of the Only Begotten did not diminish the fullness or indissolubility of the Trinity. For the Word is one, even when incarnate, and is not divided into two, but before the ages He is one, simple and incorporeal, as is the Father and the Holy Spirit. At the end of time, however, when He became man for our salvation, He is not simple or incorporeal but one of two—divinity and humanity—perfect in their proper notions, not because, being God, He changed simplicity, but because, remaining steadfastly what He was, He took upon Himself the union with the flesh and became man for us. Just as an original union unites our rational soul to the body by a simultaneous germination, without rejecting its natural intellectuality and incorporeality but by a simultaneous accord from both, it completes man himself as one hypostasis, one nature, and one living being—so the Son of God Himself, when, without change, He was hypostatically united to the flesh, which has an intellectual soul, was called Emmanuel, which He was, since it is said "God with us," being one person, one hypostasis, one incarnate nature of the Word, without change or confusion of the elements from which the inexplicable

union took place. These elements, on the one hand, due to the mixture, relate to wet and fluid bodies and, on the other, are foreign to incorporeal nature, but after the union, they can no longer be divided by duality, for duality itself is the destruction of the union. For what means could one find to separate again, in Him who is hypostatically united in an indivisible union, the elements of which He is composed? Or who, having sound thoughts, could say that the uncreated Word of God suffered a change in His body, or—what is different—that the body from the holy Virgin, consubstantial with us, withdrew from its own nature and passed into the divine essence, which is inaccessible and incomprehensible to all created beings? For it was not in the way that Moses' rod was changed into a serpent, nor the Nile into blood, nor the light of Egypt into darkness, that the Word of God was changed into the nature of man. These things were indeed created and corporeal, subject to quantity and quality, often transformed simultaneously and in the same manner—for some in one way, for others in the opposite way, as was the case for the Egyptians and the children of Israel, according to God's will. Thus, even the manna adapted itself to the full range of tastes, satisfying each one's desire. The divine nature, on the contrary, being what it is, is firm, fixed, infinite, and unlimited; it is without change. In it, there is no change nor shadow of alteration, as the sacred book proclaims. Concerning Moses' rod, it is written that he threw it to the ground, and it became a serpent. Similarly, concerning the waters, it is said that he turned all the waters of the river into blood. But concerning the God of the universe, you will never find in the divine book the word: "He was changed." Even if in the prophet Hosea He says: "I multiplied visions and imitated by the hands of the prophets," the imitation itself is not a change of essence but a prefiguration of the reality to come, in the form of a sign.

Thus, Ezekiel also says: "This vision of the likeness of the glory of the Lord"—this was an imitation of the Lord's glory, not of His essence, rather than a change. Therefore, the figure of probity is one thing, and the demonstration of conduct in reality is another, as it is said. But concerning the Word's coming in the flesh, it is also written: "He was found in the form of a man and in appearance like a man." Yet He removed in advance the error of illusion, that is, of transformation, by saying: "He took the form of a servant," and then amended the words: "He was found in the form of men." For He who took our essence—for this is the form of a servant—and united it hypostatically to Himself, necessarily showed both the

appearance and the likeness relative to us, not by pretending, but by becoming this without change. For one who, by transformation or unreal vision, would only feign appearance, would have no need to take anything. But if, using force and oppression, you say that the form of a servant is merely an imitation and resemblance, first the word "He took" rises against you. For one takes a reality fully, not a hallucination. It is not through fictions, as in the composition of fables, that the Word Himself imitated and assumed a false mask of humanity, but by this means He takes hold of you, the elusive one, for the sake of agreement.

What does the Apostle himself say? "Who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." Just as when He was in the form of God, He was in the essence of God, not merely in imagination or as in an empty and non-hypostatic imprint, so truly He also took the essence, not the shadow of a servant, when He united Himself hypostatically to the flesh endowed with a rational soul. For both, Paul fittingly used the name "form." And if you say: "Why, then, on the mountain, was His form not changed when John, James, and Peter were present?" I will dispel your doubt by simply reading to you the words of the Gospel and showing you the mode of the change of form. "His face," it says, "shone like the sun, and His garments became white as light." Did this radiance of His face with a glory worthy of God, like the sun, and the gleaming of His garments with the brightness of light, indicate a change in essence, or show that He ceased to be man—which, in truth, He willed to become without change, remaining God? Or was this especially what is true in reality: that He was the same who kindled a small spark of His personal sublimity for revelation, besides wishing to strengthen the disciples' understanding as much as possible? For when Peter had heard beforehand of the salutary cross and had human thoughts, he said: "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You." Indeed, if the Word of God Himself became man in illusion and not in truth, without any change, and did not take our flesh, it would be superfluous to have recourse to Mary. It would be a fable that the time of gestation and her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, as it is written. The birth itself, the swaddling clothes, the growth in age, the hunger, the sleep, the weariness from the journey, the scourging, the cross, and even this ultimate and so important fact for the demonstration of truth—that after the resurrection, Jesus cried out to the doubting disciples: "Touch Me and see; a spirit does not have flesh and bones as

you see that I have"—would all be imagination and dreams, it seems. He did not say: "I appear in flesh and bones," but: "I have flesh and bones," clearly showing that He took from our essence what He had by a true and indivisible union.

Now, I have recounted these things not as mere indications but as necessary and useful for those beginning in the teaching of the faith, striving to uproot in advance every seed of tares and false doctrines, lest they harm the good seed. And indeed, it was not in vain or without cause that the Only Begotten Word and Son of God the Father became man, but for our aid. For He saw that we had misconducted ourselves with our souls, enslaving and subjecting the intelligence, which possesses itself and was made in the image of God, to the passions of the flesh. He who was destined to be the head and, as a king, to command the bodily senses in what must be done, was tyrannically oppressed by desires, the scale of the flesh having tipped downward, ensnaring and turning the rational character of the soul to its opposite, overturning it somehow and reversing it, dragging it down to the level of the irrational. Seeing this, He had pity; and casting Himself as mediator, He united Himself entirely to our whole formation, so that to what is excellent, He might give the yield found in excellent things. For He was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mother of God, taking flesh consubstantial with us, endowed with an intellectual soul, while the Spirit truly formed the child Himself, and Mary, without diminution, beyond sin and desire, brought forth all that women are apt to bring forth for a child, taking from their essence, yet purely, the bond of virginity remaining unbroken. This befits God and is marvelous in the child, showing that He who was born was God; for He was hypostatically united to the created body.

And "how," someone will say, "was the whole Word in the body, when He is complete and infinite?" Tell me, how does He fill all things and is above all, and is wholly in all and wholly above all? For you do not say that a part taken from Him is enclosed in the whole and the rest passes above all and spreads beyond all. This is proper to measurable and finite things; but for the infinite and incomprehensible nature, it is entirely strange and foreign. If, then, you have no words to say on this matter, but believe that He is wholly in all and above all, believe likewise that, in an infinite manner, He is wholly united hypostatically to the body and fills all. Such is the nature of wonders, defended by the will of God and the power of Him who imposed order on nature itself and is not led by nature. For to God the Word,

not only the body is small, but likewise the whole universe, which indeed occupies a place beside Him and is not a point relative to the universe; for "the ends of the earth are in His hand," as it is written. Yet after becoming man, He willingly obeyed most of the laws of nature, He who is above nature and free by essence. And it is through all these things that are ours that He came, without sin, to destroy sin and the curse upon humankind. For this was the word: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." Therefore, He also shared with us the entrance into this world, submitting to fleshly birth, and thereby laid the root of immortality through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit upon His incarnation, His conception, and the virginity of the mother who bore Him. Thus, He was seen on earth and conversed with men, tracing for us the path of perfect life and good conduct, beyond all imagination. For His aim was to heal real pains with a real remedy. Therefore, He took all these things that are mine, except sin, so that where corruption is found, He might manifest incorruptibility. "He committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth." Therefore, He also came to the trial of death, to destroy death, which had prevailed over us, though He is immortal by nature. This brings us close to the teaching of Paul's words, who says: "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." Therefore, he says: "In the same way as we, He partook of blood and flesh and shared in the same things," so that, having rendered death inoperative, He might free us from the slavery of the devil, who held us enslaved as condemned for sin and delivered us to the dominion of death. He would not have endured death if He had not shared in the same nature as us. For if He had not been incarnate and become man, He could not have suffered, since He is incorporeal God and inaccessible to suffering. Therefore, as He was incarnate, by this very fact He also suffered; for, as impassible, even when He suffered, He remained impassible. It was in the flesh that He certainly suffered, not in the divinity, and He made known, especially by what He suffered, that He is impassible.

Therefore, we must not divide Him, because of this, into a duality of natures after the union, lest we seem to be vain defenders of God's impassibility. But with confidence, we proclaim Him one and incarnate, adhering to the teaching of the sacred books, which declare that He suffered in His flesh, knowing clearly that

suffering does not go beyond the passible body: for it in no way touches the impassibility of the divinity. It is as when the rope is cut, the one in the fable is cast far from it. Do not, then, separate Him from what is capable of suffering, so that we attribute the restoration from suffering to the man taken separately, and not to God. Remember that concerning God, who is truly impassible, you must give an account, and do not fear, even if you yourself are sick with the theopaschism you attribute to us, as if He who cannot suffer suffered something contrary to nature, wrestling with death through the flesh. For just as iron, when heated in fire and receiving the flame into its depths, so that it seems to be the very reality of fire, is itself struck by those who strike it when laid on the anvil, yet the nature of the fire suffers nothing, even though it is indivisibly united to what is struck and subjected to violent blows from hammers—so you will truly understand concerning the salvific suffering, borrowing a small symbol and slight resemblance from this example (for the comparison itself and its relation to the image are completely surpassed by the truth), because the Word of God was united to the very body receiving the blows of suffering, yet the suffering itself is believed to belong to Him, though He did not depart from His natural impassibility, because the body that bore the suffering was His own and not another's. Therefore, it is said that He only tasted death when He destroyed it by His divine resurrection after three days: on the one hand, by the burial of His body, uprooting and exterminating the corruption of the tomb, signified by the fact that many bodies of saints who had died were awakened, then resurrected, and hastened into the holy city; on the other hand, by the soul, for He was wholly united to it, and wholly in the body, complete and indivisible, after descending into Hades and taking pity on the souls imprisoned there, saying, according to the prophet's word, to those in bonds: "Come forth," and to those in darkness: "Show yourselves."

He who rose ascended into the heavens; He who descended without a body ascended with a body. Being one of the Trinity, He did not add a fourth number to it, whether in person, nature, or hypostasis. Thus, He sits at the right hand of the Father, so that, with the help of the names and thoughts customary among us, you may learn His own equality of honor and His royal quality from His throne. Otherwise, what would be the right or left of the Father, who is without body, appearance, or limit? He will come thus to judge the living and the dead, to be seen even by those who pierced Him, as the prophecy says. He has thus delivered us

from the slavery of those who are not gods and brought us the knowledge of Him who is God and Father of heaven.

Therefore, rise up, you who are now being catechized according to the word of piety, and cast off these heavy bonds with courage. Say the sacred words of David: "Let us break their bonds and cast away their cords from us." Look and turn toward the setting sun, and thus renounce Satan and the host of demons, worse than all, and their artifices, showing by this attitude that the old man has disappeared along with his ways and has gone toward the west. And after doing this, turn to the East and enter into these covenants with Christ, for it is customary for those delivered from tyranny—that is, from a certain captivity—to bind themselves by covenants to the victorious king who freed them from bitter slavery and to offer Him tribute. And what is the tribute that Christ asks of those who believe in Him and are baptized in His name and in the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit? It is that they always look toward the East and the day without evening of the Resurrection, preparing and disposing themselves for it. And once they have cast off the works of darkness, they will put on the armor of light and walk honorably as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. For these are the pomps of the slanderer and his works and all that accompanies them, things that Paul has encompassed in the words he presented afterward, saying: "Make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." When you do this cheerfully, we ask why, in this promise, you agree only with Christ and not also with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The primary reason is well known and undisputed for those who know the sacred words of the Spirit. For He Himself, in the Gospels, called Himself the door and the way, making accessible to us through the Incarnation Him who is inaccessible by nature, and He carved out for Himself a way, by immeasurable condescension, to the feet of our thought, which limped and stumbled because of the error of idols, broken and unable to advance toward the high, elevated, and difficult summit of the knowledge of the one God.

Therefore, as beginners in the studies that are beginning, standing outside the sacred courts, run to the way and the door, so that when you knock by what you are about to say, adhering to Him who said: "Knock, and it will be opened to you," He may openly and promptly open and widen the entrance for you. Moreover, he who is aligned with Christ and agrees with Him is also aligned with the Trinity.

Primarily because of the identity of essence of the three hypostases, and then because the name of Christ is properly that of the Son who was anointed, who alone is called Christ, for neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit is anointed. Yet He elevates us and raises us to the thought of the Holy Trinity. For He makes known the Father who anointed, the Son who was anointed, and the Holy Spirit who is understood as the anointing. For Paul, writing to the Hebrews, says: "What was said by David in the prophecy concerning the Son shows the Father who anoints and the Son who is anointed: 'Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness beyond Your companions.'" Luke, on the other hand, wrote: "When Jesus rose in the synagogue of the Jews and received the book of the prophet Isaiah, He read the prophecy concerning Himself, which made known that instead of oil, He was anointed by the Spirit." This is the word spoken thus in the name of Christ: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me."

But see, when you enter the sanctuary and behold the source of the fearsome and terrible Jordan—for the Jordan is all the waters consecrated in the name of Jesus, who Himself first cast for us into the Jordan the beginning of divine baptism. For we also pray that the grace of the Jordan may be given to the waters, lest any of you, judging with the eyes of the flesh, regard the waters as mere waters. But with the eyes of faith, we will see that the heavenly river, flowing from above, is filled with divine fire, capable of purification. For "He is near who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Multitudes of incorporeal ministers surround the very source, as well as myriads of angels, thousands of archangels, and other armies, battalions, and cohorts of high rank. Do not let your spirit descend to what is below, you who have imagined what is above. And when you are thus disposed in thought and faith, Christ, the sun of righteousness, will shine in you. For the course of the Jordan is waters of strength and healing, differing from other waters as much as life-giving, sweet, and drinkable waters differ from the salty, which produces corruption. And one can show that this was prefigured in advance by the sacred books. For in the fourth book of Kings, it is written that a captain, that is, a commander of the army of the king of Syria, named Naaman, came to the prophet Elisha, his body stained with leprosy, and he begged for purification from his affliction. But Elisha, having received the command of the righteous man saying: "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean," despised this mode of healing. And filled with anger, he

departed, saying: "Behold, I thought, 'He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leprosy.' Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" And he turned and went away in a rage. But his servants came near and said to him: "Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" So Naaman went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Do you see the virtue of the Jordan's waters and how those who think them like other waters fall short of what is just to think and stray far from the truth? And why do you not consider how the very narrative of the history was the figure of the mystery to come and of this divine baptism? First, indeed, it was in the Jordan and not in some other waters that the prophet commanded him to wash, making known that only these waters purify, those that can wash away the stain. Who, then, is so ignorant of the sacred books as not to know that the Jordan itself is holy for no other reason than because of Jesus, the most honorable and salutary name—Jesus, who was also baptized in it in the last days and was prefigured long ago by Jesus bar Nun: at the passage of the ark, He stopped its flow, turned it back, and made Israel pass as through dry land. Second, one must consider how, after Elisha said: "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times," the book truly inspired by God did not remain with the word "wash" but said: "And Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times," clearly proclaiming that the washing in the Jordan is also the baptism, and that Naaman, the first from among the Gentiles, the Syrian, was baptized in the Jordan and cleansed of leprosy, prefiguring the Church of the Gentiles, which was once leprous and unclean and was brought forward by its call to baptism and prospered more than Israel. Moreover, the dipping seven times prefigured the perfect descent of the Holy Spirit, who flew and descended upon the Jordan in the form of a dove. For by seven indications—for the number seven is perfect—the prophet Isaiah showed the perfection of the Spirit, saying: "The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and godliness, the Spirit of the fear of the Lord."

But we must also fix our attention on this, to learn that in the very figure of the book's narrative, nothing is diverted from exactness, but even in it one can see the truth manifest and clear. For it does not say only of Naaman: "He dipped himself," but adds: "According to the word of the man of God." For it is in the word of him who administers the baptism and exercises the priesthood and prays that the Spirit dwells. The waters give birth, as Paul also, writing to the Ephesians, says of Christ: "And cleansed her by the washing of water with the word." Yet what I am about to say does not deserve contempt, as if it were not marvelous or very fitting for God. For it was necessary that we say it. If it were not a mystery that has become known—that after this Syrian washed, he became well. But what does he say? "And his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child." Now this is what the divine and true baptism itself promises to grant: not only the purification of sins, which are like leprous stains, but also spiritual childhood and youth, and that, moreover, we may be courageous against the spirits of evil. This is why it is also called the washing of regeneration, since it makes us new children, then born, instead of old men. Thus, the Apostle himself says: "The Church, having been cleansed by baptism, without spot or wrinkle," showing by "spot" the rejection of sin and by "wrinkle" the retreat and deliverance from old age and the age of childhood—for a wrinkle is a sign of old age—and "putting off the old man and putting on the new," as the sacred book says. Moreover, this mysterious washing is called baptism because we are buried with Christ, being associated with Him in the death of three days by the triple immersion in the waters. For He Himself thus called His own death when He said to some of His disciples: "Can you drink the cup that I am to drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And very rightly: the cup, because the trial of death came to Him not by force or violence but was accepted and came from His own will; the baptism, because He did not remain in Hades but rose immediately, like those who plunge into the depths of the waters and immediately rise and emerge without any trouble. But when they are buried with Him by the triple immersion and are changed in the bridal chamber into the likeness of the life-giving death, they are also associated with Him in the resurrection. "For if we have been united with Him in a death like His," says Paul, "we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His." Now, to the death of three days corresponds also the very name of the Holy Trinity, in which baptism is accomplished; for we are baptized in the name of the Father

and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, of the one divinity in the Trinity, to whom be praise forever. Amen!

## HOMILY 43 ON THE VERSE FROM JOHN: "AND FROM HIS FULLNESS WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED, GRACE UPON GRACE" (JOHN 1:16); AND ON THE NEWLY BAPTIZED. TABLE OF CONTENTS

We have just heard how the divine evangelist John, wishing to proclaim aloud the greatness of the ineffable love of the Only Son of God and Word, which He manifested through His "inhumanation," cried out in astonishment: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). He spoke, as it were, of both the immeasurable wealth befitting God and the goodness He has shown us. This sublime Being, above all nature, by whom all things visible and invisible were created, who is feared and unseen by the cherubim, seraphim, and all the powers above the world—He descended from that inaccessible height, so exalted that He is also called the Head, and to what degree of humility: “He became flesh and dwelt among us”. At first, indeed, He dwelt in the souls of the just and, from time to time, inhabited the prophets when He rebuked those who had strayed from good and foretold what was to come. But now, when He unites Himself to a single soul, created in His image, this act of condescension is not so extraordinary, for it is akin to Him, of the family of divinity, and this spiritual and incorporeal nature is not entirely distant from Him. But that He should descend further into the thickness of flesh, take me and all of me into the unity of a person, and, apart from sin and any change, become man without being altered in what He was—how could this not be astonishing above all else? For the mind of the one who reflects is seized: He who surpasses all things is clothed in grandeur; He who is so despised and annihilated on the opposite side is enveloped in lowliness. On the one hand, He sets aside and restrains all words and thoughts; on the other, He praises only the One who, through humility, is known to be even greater.

How do you know, O you who speak of divine things? Explain to us: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us”. For this is truly a great mystery you announce to us. "This proof," he says, "was a trial for me. For we have seen, I and those with me, His glory—glory as of the Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). As if to say: It is not as though I have seen His essence as the Word, which is unknown to all; nor does he specify that it was seen or understood. I say what I say: but from His actions and words befitting God, I saw His glory clearly with my own eyes—not the glory given in part, as to one of the just of old, nor like

Moses, who received the law and whose face was illumined and glorified, as God said: “Those who glorify Me, I will glorify” (1 Samuel 2:30). Rather, it was the glory “as of the Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14), that is, what is fitting for the Son Himself, the Only One, who in nature and essence is in Him. This is why he did not say "glory as of a son," lest anyone think this title is given as a favor. For others too have been called sons in this way, as when I said: “You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High” (Psalm 82:6). But as the “Only Son”—for this proves a true and genuine birth from the Father and the identity of essence. He showed that He came from the Father and was not like a servant coming from God, in His actions and in His glorification. For when someone receives in their eyes the brightness of the sun's light, they know that it is through the ray that this true and genuine light shines. He was indeed “full of glory and truth and grace”, and there was absolutely nothing lacking in Him. To be in fullness and without lack is proper to God alone. And that this is so for Him, he says that John the Baptist also testified when he cried out, saying: “This is He of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks before me, because He was before me” (John 1:15). The phrase “He was before me” is well and rightly placed: he testified as a herald of the Word who runs ahead. For if he had only said, “He was before me”, one might say: as a man, He surpassed all others in perfection and the demonstration of miracles. But now he revealed and illuminated the reason why He was before him, saying: “Because He was before me”, even though, by this coming into being in the flesh, Jesus was second to John in time. How, then, was He first, or how is it known that He is God? Now the evangelist, sealing his testimony more clearly and openly, adds: “And from His fullness we have all received” (John 1:16). Do not be astonished, saying: If John, who is “greater than the children of women” (Matthew 11:11), in these primordial and first things, is attached to Jesus, he is attached to Him as to God. For it is not he alone, but “we all have received from His fullness” (John 1:16). For He was “the sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2), perfect in all things and in fullness, illuminating many faces. By all He was received, according to each one's capacity, and He has in Himself His own light, without defect. And not as He is, nor as He came, “we have all received from His fullness, grace upon grace” (John 1:16): in place of the grace of the law, the grace of the Gospel. For if we had not first been corrected by the establishment of the law of Moses, like children, through these commandments resembling the letters of

beginners—A, B—we could not have received the greatness of this more perfect grace.

But it seems to me that this verse also shows another meaning. For at the beginning, when the Creator brought Adam from nothingness into being, fashioned him from the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, enriching what was in the image of God, Adam, filled with the divine action here below, gave names to each of the animals and birds. And when astonishment and sleep came upon him, and a rib was taken from him, from which God made Eve, after his sleep, he recognized her, saying: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:23). And immediately God, like a prophet, foretold the future: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). But that these words are not Adam’s but the divine Creator’s, as I have said, our Lord testified in the Gospels when He said: “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife” (Matthew 19:4–5)? Thus, it is clear that it was not Adam who said this, but the same God of whom it was said that there was no other then upon whom the grace of the Holy Spirit rested. And Adam fell away from it through the transgression of the commandment. This is why our Savior, when He raised the disciples to this first thought and showed that He was the God who once breathed the breath of life into Adam’s face (Genesis 2:7), “breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). It is of Him, then, that the evangelist speaks: “From His fullness we have all received” (John 1:16), and from the grace of the Spirit, in place of that grace from which we had fallen. For He who gave that grace in fullness now bestows this one more richly and abundantly: “From His fullness” (John 1:16). And lest anyone say, "What then? Was grace not given through Moses?" he presents the answer in advance, saying: “The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). For the law, God gave as a helper, as the prophet Isaiah says. For when the natural law in us was revolting and oppressed by the passions, the written law was a helper through reminders, as when it says: “You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery”, and all that resembles this, teaching us to turn away from sins. Yet it brought us more under the curse, since we were unable to fulfill the commandment, and the commandment of life became death, as Paul says: “Cursed

be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them" (Galatians 3:10). For there is no forgiveness of sins nor gift of the Spirit: this deviation, through Adam's transgression, the law made known. But these are the properties of grace and truth, which came through Jesus Christ—among them, adoption as sons after the deliverance from sins, and those rivers that flowed from the belly of those who believed in Him (John 7:38–39). He too breathed and spoke through the prophets because they prophesied about Him. But the law, given through Moses as a figure and a seal, only foreshadowed these things. He who fulfilled them in reality is Christ, who is truthful. But by what was also said by those who greatly esteemed Moses, the evangelist elevated and raised the glory that should be ascribed to Christ, showing that Moses was His servant, prefiguring the Truth.

Therefore, rejoice in this and such grace, you who are now deemed worthy of holy baptism. Observe this with all attention. For I return the word to you, because we, with many stains, have soiled the shining garment of adoption as sons. This is why we also need abundant and fervent repentance, a stream of tears sufficient to wash away and drown the weight of our faults. To this must be added another life with other virtues, to completely erase the stains. But for you, nothing like this must be endured, but only that you rejoice in the goods that have been given and resound with the words foretold by the prophet Isaiah: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels" (Isaiah 61:10). If you conduct yourselves with the sense of the glorification given to you, living it in spirit and word, and do not receive the suggestions of the Slanderer, correcting yourselves in all things, fearing lest any stain mar this most glorious and brilliantly shining tunic, little by little this divine land will flourish in you, and you will harmonize with what was said above, with these other words of the prophet: "For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations" (Isaiah 61:11). For you will truly appear as "lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" (Philippians 2:15), as the Apostle says. But your outward garment, which appears, is maintained by the power of His word, and it cries out to all who see the spectacle of His tunic:

“You are children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness” (1 Thessalonians 5:5). Therefore, prepare yourselves for resplendent deeds of the day, aiming at the splendor of the life to come, disposing yourselves through vigils and watches. Do not fall asleep in worldly and fleeting cares, nor dream of baseless hopes and worldly imaginations. We will not remain long in this present life. Soon, we will depart.

Do not leave yourselves naked, without this precious and purer-than-all garment. Do not cast from your face this blush of the fire of the Spirit that blooms upon you. It provokes the fear of demons and their chief, the Slanderer, when they assail these souls freed from the body and undergoing this discipline, which must not be omitted: purifying themselves from these stains, rising up against evil, and casting it back into the darkness that has overtaken them. For together we will suffer this eternal sentence after the dreadful word of the Judge: “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). For this reason, baptism has also been called “the washing of regeneration” (Titus 3:5), and for this, those who are baptized in the Spirit and water are immersed, just as what is dyed red or purple remains, for the dye prevails as long as it permeates and remains in its hue and is not washed out. Therefore, you who have been dyed with this divine dye, do not rid yourselves of this spiritual and ardent blush, as I have said, nor plunge it into moist passions. Do not strip yourselves of this tunic that has delivered you from sins and is like snow. Lean confidently on the support of the King when you eat at this spiritual supper, and do not hear that sad word: “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?” (Matthew 22:12). For you are fiery in appearance, shining with the rays of the Spirit. These linen veils too, which are on your heads and descend to your eyes, proclaim this. For just as Moses, who had been very close to God, had a shining and resplendent face that his companions could not bear when he appeared, and for this reason was forced to cover it (Exodus 34:29–35), so too you, but even more insistently, because of the great distance, are forced, when your head, face, and all your members are illumined by the coming of the Spirit, to hide this most brilliant splendor with a veil, teaching our eyes by this garment not to wander with curiosity. But since you are also “the temples of God” (1 Corinthians 3:16), we cover your heads and faces as with precious curtains, and approaching with great reverence, we give you peace, trusting in faith alone—faith that often dares to rise up even against what

one would not have dared to think, faith that God also gives and with which He descended. And that noise is not effective, but the word is powerful, and more powerful than what has been said, you will find it was so at the beginning of preaching, when the apostles baptized and laid the foundations of Christian teaching. For then it was still the time of demonstration through miracles and wonders, when unbelief was rampant. As the Apostle wrote to the Corinthians: “Signs are for unbelievers” (1 Corinthians 14:22). Thus, when Peter baptized those of the household of the centurion Cornelius, those called to this, even before they approached the water, spoke in tongues (Acts 10:44–46). And when Paul, for others in Ephesus who knew only the baptism of John, completed what was lacking in the Spirit, leading them to the waters of Jesus the Savior and God, he united with the gift of tongues also the gift of prophecy (Acts 19:1–6). For those who were baptized spoke in tongues and prophesied. And what need is there to think of the innumerable miracles of which these people were deemed worthy, who had faith in Christ and carried the faith to the ends of the earth, drawing all men to it?

In summary, then, the whole word is, as it were, addressed to you: you who, at once, have been enriched with all this wealth of grace, so that with attentive zeal you hold it tightly and watch over it, leaving no entrance to wall-breakers or thieves. But the wall-breakers I compare to the malice of thoughts—those that have a fair face and seem upright, when one of you reflects and says: "Such a one is faithful and Christian, like me; and he goes shamelessly to the horse races or the theater; he enters the tavern; he converses with courtesans; he is assiduous in drinking; he delights in the midst of cymbals and flutes; he takes pleasure in lewd songs; he is in the streets with children and delights in forbidden pleasures with them." And not only he, but many others are caught in the same inclination. What then, tell me? Shall I alone show the rigor of the Gospel? And why then should I not go into the deserts? Resemble those who lead the monastic life? Leap away, flee, my brother, from such a thought; cast far from you these thoughts of the Slanderer: this is his work, his plan, and his retinue. Now you have renounced this; do not return to what you have left. “You are children of light” (Ephesians 5:8); look at yourselves and know who you are. Let your honor suffice as doctrine for you; do not envy the wicked, “nor be jealous of those who do iniquity” (Psalm 37:1), as David says. And how is it not shameful that those who engage in

commerce and prepare to cross wide seas, hoping to enrich themselves, dare to face dangers without even considering how many sink and suffer shipwreck? But they look at the few who succeed and persevere and do not waver in their plans.

But those who approach piety display in broad daylight the pernicious example of evildoers, and for this reason, they abhor the labors of perfection. While one rushes headlong into dangers, dreaming of non-existent riches, you, on the other hand, already possess the goods and the greater part of the wealth; you hold it close to you: deliverance from sins, the grace of adoption, the indwelling of God in you. You also find Him by whom you increase your wealth daily, applying yourself to good works. Likewise, when you practice your trade and are carried away by other worldly affairs for the sustenance of your daily life, tolerate no imperfection. If you take care not to go to the theaters, not to soil your ears and eyes, not to let yourself be seduced by the spectacles and sounds of the Slanderer; if you go to church for morning and evening prayers, delight in the divine praises of the psalms, and honor God.

But when I say this, I am greatly angered and suffer within myself, for I see that those who repeat the word of piety with zeal, in all purity, taking responsibility, are worthy of holy baptism, because they have suffered insults for imitating us. And just as I let fall all these other things—what is worthy of contempt, small, and considered negligible in the eyes of many—I now introduce it in the midst: when the priests stand and pray, some look at the ground, bow, and pray with them, and with attentive and applied thought, respond "Amen." But you, on the contrary, stand proudly, gaping after worldly affairs. This "Amen" is much more urgent than all else, entirely, and it speaks at the same time as the prayer. For when translated from Hebrew into Greek, it means: “So be it!” When the priest offers supplications for you, you ought to respond: “So be it!” Do you not feel that through your fault you are responsible for all this deficiency? Paul, aware of this, does not compliment those who pray or bless in private, to the point where those in the crowd cannot respond, "Amen!" Here is what he says: “Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying?” (1 Corinthians 14:16).

But what would he say of those who run to the house of the Arians as if to the Church and think they do not anger God? “For what partnership has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14), tell me. You adore the Word and Son of God as uncreated and equal in eternity to the Father, but they, when they say He is created and made, defile themselves with the impiety of pagans, serving the creature rather than the Creator. But I also hear of those who act in a pagan and atheistic manner by reading the “broulēmata”—that is, the Acts of what was done, they say, before Pilate, in the days of the redemptive passion. These accounts, the tyrant Maximin, who surpassed all men in impiety, as is written in ecclesiastical histories, had taught even to children in schools, in place of all other instruction, though they are fables and lies. The Arians rival him when they strive to diminish the divinity of the Only Son and to lower His equality of honor with the Father and His consubstantiality. But you, you rejoice when you hear these same abominations and judge them not detestable, though they are, even if you only hurl insults before the curtain of this little house. While the sacred owners of the Church are tormented by a heavy and harsh punishment for those who enter the house of heretics and dare to insult with them—but with the same unscrutinizing spirit, this is also done by some—this is an impiety greater than all. For they eat the unleavened bread of the Jews sent to them. Is there not, then, a small difference between the Jews and us? They crucified Christ for blasphemy and transgression of the law, but you adore Him as the Creator of heaven and earth. He, God, because they rebelled against Him, turned His face away from them. He foretold this through the prophet, saying: “I will turn your feasts into mourning” (Amos 8:10). And you, you eat their bread of sorrow, you who have been deemed worthy to eat the bread of heaven and to redden your lips with the blood of immortality, by which He redeemed you from sin, He who has filled your tongue with exultation (Psalm 126:2). This transgression of the law, greater than that of the sacred canons, deserves punishment. Why, then, bring upon us in vain the curse and anathema? For this and similar reasons, I fear and dread lest this harm those enrolled in the flock of Christ. But let us also take care not to commit a double sin: one by acting unjustly against ourselves and harming ourselves; the other by harming others who imitate us. But let them too, the newly baptized, not take our negligence as provision and occasion for sin. Rather, let them fulfill the law of the Apostle, who says: “Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good” (Romans 12:9). For in this, we can all merit the kingdom of heaven. May we all be worthy of it by the grace

and love of the great God and our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory with the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

**HOMILY 44 ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS OF OLD, CELEBRATED AMONG US AFTER THE WEEK OF THE FEAST OF THE ADORABLE RESURRECTION OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.** TABLE OF CONTENTS

Among the feasts celebrated by Christians, there is none so far above all admiration and which so clearly reveals our mystery and all our doctrine—the hope of immortality. And what convinces me of this today, to say it particularly, is the “hypothesis”, that is, the reason for the gathering that brings us here. Indeed, after the feast of the Savior’s Passion and Resurrection, we first celebrate the commemoration of all the righteous in general who have fallen asleep in the past, proclaiming to all men, as with a mighty trumpet and a loud sound, this very truth: that one death alone, that of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, was sufficient to erase the sin and guilt of all men. Now, this could never have happened if He who endured death in the flesh were not God; for it belongs to God alone to die for all men.

But perhaps someone will say: “How can you say that He who died is God, when Paul clearly stated in his letter to Timothy: "The man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all"?” — What then? Do you not hear him say: “The Lord of glory was crucified?” And: “From the Jews, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever, amen!” And: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever!” For He was one of two—truly divine and human—each perfect in its own nature, while being consubstantial with the Father in divinity and the same consubstantial with us men in humanity. And indeed, we also say that man, our own, composed of a soul and a body in one hypostasis, is a mortal, rational animal. Yet it is through the body that he is mortal, and through the soul that he is rational. Still, the whole animal is called mortal and entirely called rational. The elements from which he is naturally composed are not confused, nor is he divided into two. So it is also with Emmanuel, who is one of two natures, one hypostasis, and one incarnate nature of the Word, without in any way confusing the elements from which the ineffable union took place, nor, while remaining one, allowing duality—from which division arises—to enter. For He who is one in the proper sense can never become two; and when He passes into being two, He has necessarily ceased to be one. Therefore, since Jesus Christ is one, even if someone

names Him partially and calls Him a man, He is understood as the incarnate God; and even if someone calls Him God, He is recognized as the Word made man. This is why, knowing Him to be one and indivisible, we necessarily use all these "prosdiorsmoi"—that is, all the complementary definitions—calling Him consubstantial with the Father in divinity, the same consubstantial with us in humanity, the same passible in the flesh, and impassible in divinity.

Indeed, if, according to the words of the impious, there were two natures after the union—with the human nature subsisting separately on one side and the divine nature likewise subsisting separately on the other (for they would not be counted as two otherwise, unless each particular thing subsisted independently with its own subsistence)—it would be absurd and full of excessive chatter and stupidity to say that the human nature suffered, or that it is consubstantial with us in humanity, or that the divine nature of the Word remained impassible and consubstantial with the Father in divinity. For things that are distinct and separate in hypostasis, it is truly an exaggerated wisdom to separate them in speech as if they were united. Observe the prudence of the God-inspired Scriptures, which do not succumb to division but everywhere show that the same was both man and God—one person and one hypostasis. For where they say that He was delivered to death by the Father, or crucified by others (lest anyone imagine that He was led to suffer unwillingly), they use lofty terms befitting God, saying: "He who did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all", and: "Had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." For it is well known that He who is the beloved and true Son of the Father, sharing with Him in essence and nature, and who is the Lord of glory, became obedient unto death according to the divine economy—not because He was forcibly led by anyone. And where the Scriptures proclaim Him as man, they no longer say He was delivered by the Father but that He gave Himself. How and in what way? "The man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all." And it would not belong to a man who was not also God to give Himself and be capable of saving all men. This makes the Apostle's previously cited words especially clear. For what does he say? "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all." Thus, He was not merely a man but the mediator between God and men. And it is the mediator's role to be bound by kinship to each of those who are estranged and at odds, reconciling them. Therefore, while being God by nature, the same, without changing what He was,

also became man by nature, taking the seed of Abraham. The term “took”—that is, “seized”—shows that our nature, like a wild beast, rebelled and fled far from God, and it was by His own submission that it was tamed, brought back, and drawn near to Him. For it is customary for mediators and peacemakers to stand between enemies, take each by the hand, and unite them in brotherhood or union. This is what Christ, our peace, did for us. Though we were enemies through sin and impiety, He reconciled us with the heavenly Father, utterly destroying enmity by His cross and dying for all—both the living and those who had departed this life. And let this not seem extraordinary to you—that Christ died even for those already dead. For Paul explains the reason clearly, saying: “Death reigned even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam’s transgression.” And what does this mean? Adam sinned by transgressing the commandment and lost the grace of immortality. He incurred death as the penalty for sin, for he heard: “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” From then on, as descendants of a mortal father, we too are mortal, fallen under the net of death, prone to sin, and estranged from familiarity with God. And if someone, like Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and their virtuous peers, rose above sin’s affliction and conquered it, living justly—though they were not condemned for their deeds, they still departed this life under the reign of death due to Adam’s transgression. See how prudently Paul says: “Death reigned even over those who had not sinned”—not because of their deeds (for they did not sin) but “in the likeness of Adam’s transgression.” And where is the justice, you might ask, in all men being ensnared by death because of Adam’s sin, even those who never sinned? But the Apostle preempts this objection, saying: “In the likeness of Adam’s transgression, who is a type of Him who was to come.” And who is He who was to come? The second Adam, Christ, of whom the first was a type. Just as the first condemned many, so the latter justifies many in Himself. Just as the first brought us mortality, so the latter grants the grace of immortality—after this immortal One was clothed with death through the flesh and destroyed its dominion over us by His resurrection.

Thus, we have not been harmed by the first Adam’s transgression, for we have been magnificently aided by the second. Indeed, the first Adam’s condemnation to death itself was a great and excellent help. For had he remained immortal after sinning, the consequences of sin would remain unabolished, and evil itself would be immortal. But now, hearing through him, “You are dust, and to dust you shall

return", we are not rejected or abandoned by the just God. Even if He withdraws our spirit and we die and return to dust (as the psalmist says), yet because we have received the pledge of resurrection and the grace of adoption, we will rise renewed, shedding the old sin. "You will send forth Your Spirit, and they will be created, and You will renew the face of the earth."

For this reason, we celebrate the commemoration of the righteous of old after the Resurrection—because "death reigned even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression." And so we give thanks to the Savior of us all, Christ, who descended into the lower parts of the earth. The gates of Hades trembled at His presence, and He shattered the iron bars and bronze doors of death—giving even them a sure and true hope of resurrection, which they had awaited from the beginning, now granting them rest in illuminated regions and the delights of Paradise. This is why our Savior says in the Gospels: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; he saw it and was glad." What then is required of us for such aid and blessings? Let us learn from the Apostle, who teaches: "He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and rose again."

Do we not live only for ourselves and not for Christ when one builds splendid houses, anchored to the earth, never expecting death or a future life? When another practices injustice in farming, another in trade, another multiplies loans and frets over how interest, fallen due, will revive with new bonds—not how he himself will rise at the resurrection of the just? And behold, he passes by a poor man without even offering a coin, forgetting that it is Christ who hungers. What shall I say of women who despairingly mourn their dead? Does this not invite Jews and pagans to accuse us of unbelief? They will rightly say: "What hope of a future life do they have, who lament their dead so inconsolably?" The reason for this grief is that we depart for the resurrection without the provisions of good works. If we wept with this thought, would our tears not be cause for accusation? Now we weep not as if the departed would lose eternal goods due to lack of preparation, but as if they had been delivered from this wretched life. Thus, I am anguished, bitter, and torn—for when the deacon proclaims the prayer for the departed, naming the deceased and interceding for his rest, I hear the lamentations and cries of women rise above all, drowning out the voice of the intercessor. They ought instead to pray with us,

grieving over the fearful departure, the terrible summons before Christ's tribunal. But we disregard the future. Therefore, let us correct these things and welcome the memory of the righteous into our hearts. Let us pray to be made worthy of their portion and inheritance—by the grace and love of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be praise, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

**HOMILY 45 ON THIS (VERSE) WRITTEN BY THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY: "EXERCISE YOURSELF IN PIETY; FOR BODILY EXERCISE IS PROFITABLE FOR A LITTLE, BUT PIETY IS PROFITABLE FOR ALL THINGS, HAVING THE PROMISE OF THE LIFE THAT NOW IS AND OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME" (1 TIM. 4:7-8). AND ON WHAT WAS SAID BY OUR SAVIOR TO MARY: "DO NOT TOUCH ME, FOR I HAVE NOT YET ASCENDED TO MY FATHER" (JOHN 20:17). AND ON THE VICTORY OF THE PIOUS EMPEROR (ANASTASIUS), WHICH WAS ANNOUNCED TO US.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

The desire for instruction brings the listeners to me for the explanation of divine words and the clarification of difficult questions, at all times, but especially on the more solemn days of the saving passion of Christ and His Resurrection. They have chosen two passages from the God-inspired book, asking that they be deemed worthy of explanation. Of these, here is the first, the occasion of which comes from fasting. They said indeed: "Must we endure the hardship from fasting, not only to share with the poor what we have, but also to speak the truth on our lips, to keep our hands from iniquity, to distance ourselves from greed, and to practice works of piety, since Paul writes to Timothy: For bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but piety is profitable for all things?" The second question draws its force from the feast and the resurrection itself, for they also asked to learn the meaning of these words that the universal Savior said to Mary after His resurrection from the dead: "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father." And as I promised them to say a word in the church on this subject, in this way, not only will they have an abundance of explanations, but beyond that, they will be rewarded by God for having been the cause of a hearing profitable to all. But, as distressing occupations of all kinds befell me, and discouragement and some darkness having invaded my mind, I could not reflect well, and silence seized me; and as the prophet David says: "I was mute and silent; I held my peace even from good, and my sorrow was stirred" (Ps. 39:2). Now also, as this anguish still burns in me, I am still in obscurity, clouded with sadness. Then, by way of counsel, I used the ordinance established by the Holy Spirit, which says: "Cast all your anxiety on Him, for He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7), and today I will pay this debt which has exceeded its due date. The word of the apostle which says: "Train yourself in piety,

for piety is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:7-8), some take it as referring to a good and useful exercise, but for those who train bodily and who learn. But I say that for those who train for combat, which procures good health for those who learn, this (exercise) is of little profit, for it is limited to the body and ends with it. But piety, which is an exercise of the soul and this purification by virtues, is profitable for all things, because it has the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come (1 Tim. 4:8). For those who train in the labors of virtue, it is not only in this life that they hope in Christ, but they aim for that which is to come, where are the rewards of unspeakable and endless combats, those which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man (1 Cor. 2:9).

But others give this explanation for this passage: they say indeed that this bodily exercise is illuminated by the verses that precede it. For when the apostle says: "But reject profane and old wives' fables" (1 Tim. 4:7), he then brings this: "Exercise yourself in piety, for bodily exercise is profitable for a little" (1 Tim. 4:7-8). But by profane and old wives' fables, they say he evokes the legal observances, those things which the Jews practiced, especially when they adulterated them, and after they had grown old and become near corruption, they transmitted them at the wrong time. For what is presented at the right time is useful, and what is presented at the wrong time is not useful: it is as if someone, having reached the stature of a grown man, wanted to take the breast to grow, as if nourishing himself with milk. Therefore, just as these legal observances, which Paul calls fables and old wives' tales concerning the Jews who used them at the wrong time and impiously, by the same name he also calls bodily exercise, for the legal observances are bodily, even if they are depicted as leading, in the end, to spiritual contemplations. Indeed, as it clearly appears, they concern the purification of the body and the washings of the flesh, in which there is little profit, and how many of them contained only shadow; and the law of Moses was ambiguous.

The apostle, therefore, in turning Timothy away from this bodily exercise and this conduct according to the law, was drawing this race coming from the Gentiles to pass far beyond the Jews and to establish them in the evangelical life, saying: "But piety is profitable for all things, having the promise of the present life and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). On the one hand, indeed, what is temporary

reward: the promised land, the oppression of enemies, the abundance of fruits, prosperity, and present delights; on the other, filial adoption, the enriching gift of the Spirit, and, with this present life, the life to come which has no end. See the subtlety of the apostle's thought: he did not say indeed that bodily exercise is profitable, but he said that it is profitable for a little, for he conceded it by saying that even now it occupies a (place), that it is still ambiguous and that it is his conduct. But even if he granted this, it would be of little use, for its rewards are temporary; piety, on the contrary, that is, this conduct according to the Gospel, possesses the promises of the life to come, for, manifestly, great is the mystery of piety, that which is proclaimed by the Gospel. But some say that bodily exercise is the labors of the ascetic life: fasting, not washing, sleeping on the ground, and these other (practices) by which the body is mastered. But piety is the purification of thoughts, for abstaining from food is known, indeed, to restrain rebellions, violence, and the love of bodily passions, but it does not distance from impure thoughts, or persuade to contain anger, or dull the sting of jealousy, or hold back the folly of greed, or humble pride, or incite love for neighbor and teach it. Thus, bodily exercise only humbles the flesh and is something inferior, that is, pertaining only to it. The source of profit, on the contrary, is piety, which guards thoughts, purifies the soul, which, stripping off the old man, introduces him to natural contemplation and shows men, as it is grasped by them, what are the words of creation, and (makes them) touch in theology what is awaited as another blessedness.

Therefore, to those who let themselves be guided by it, piety grants these rewards, and, already in this present life here below, it makes those who are in its school taste the life to come, granting them here below a foretaste of what is hoped for there. This is why the apostle, because (piety) has the promise, that is, the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come (1 Tim. 4:8), speaks of that of here below and that of the future. For this present life, no one calls it principally a life, but a death, during which man indeed flourishes, but withers and is destined for corruption. But he who is guided by piety gathers the promises and thoughts of that life to come: he makes it his life, both this life of this present world, because already here below he has a participation in that true life. For piety has the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come (1 Tim. 4:8). But we say this, not as one who despises the labors of the ascetic life, in imitation of that Adelphios,

of impious name, when he was sick with that heresy of the Messalians: “Let us fatten the body and promise the purification of the spirit, and, as fasting and other constraints bring only disgust and nausea and little profit, let us rise in pride: this is piety.” For he who casts far from him the labors of the body and wallows in pleasure and says that he is pure in his spirit and that he is not defiled by these thoughts of impurity or by these other passions, is like one who, burned by fire and inflamed by it, says that he feels neither in a furnace nor in smoke: on which the proverb of Wisdom marvels, which expresses itself thus: “Can a man hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn? Or can one walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be scorched?” (Prov. 6:27-28). Therefore, one must not despise these restrictions of the ascetic life; one must not neglect bodily exercise, which is the applied ascetic life, but one must take it up with all one’s strength, so that by it we may be led to piety, that which is this purification of the spirit, whose fruit is natural contemplation and the knowledge of God. For action is the stepping stone to contemplation, as Gregory the Theologian says (Or. 4 against Julian).

If, therefore, one despises practice, we will be empty of all ascetic life. For those who shake the foundation of a house prepare the ruin of the whole house: even if one has arrived at what is beyond the beginnings or the introduction to virtue, one needs what is given by the ascetic life, to restrain the violences of the body, these friends of passions that cannot be held back: which is of little profit, when piety is not yoked with it together, that is, with the guarding of thoughts and purification. For bodily exercise is what deprives of piety and is of little profit. But piety is what is profitable for all things (1 Tim. 4:8), when, even apart from all bodily exercise, it is in someone and is fixed there without hypocrisy. If indeed, each day, we do not mortify these members on earth, I do not know if Christ will ever live in us. He obliges, therefore, to bodily exercise, but also to piety, so that, as much as it can be attained by men, we may arrive at perfection. Thus was Paul, who used both at once, sometimes on the one hand saying: “I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:27); sometimes on the other: “Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5); and again: “In weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness” (2 Cor. 11:27); and again concerning some, he says: “Who

show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them" (Rom. 2:15); or again: "They will give account on the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:16). But also concerning Paul and Barnabas, the book of Acts recounts that when they prayed with fasting, they commended certain men to the Lord, because they had believed in Him (Acts 13:3). These three explanations on these verses of the apostle that were presented, we have chosen, and we have neglected none of them; and indeed they do not oppose one another, each having a direct meaning and aiming at piety: for rich and fruitful is the thought of the words of the Spirit.

But it is time now to come also to that other (verse)—and to engage in a short reflection—that (verse) which our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said to Mary after His resurrection from the dead: "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). Some indeed say that because this woman approached Him and touched Him at the same time in spirit as before, without thinking anything profitable about Him, she did not believe that this action of the Resurrection was worthy of God, glorious and sublime; but concerning Him, she still thought that, as at that first time, He would behave with more humility and humanity with His disciples. Then, therefore, as she asked for this way of acting, because of this, our Savior, elevating and raising her thought toward heaven, while she placed it below on earth, said: "Do not touch me; for I have not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17); as if He said: "Do not touch me with too much curiosity, as to seize hold of me, for I hasten to my Father." Perhaps indeed He also knew that she asked with vigor and with all her strength to seize these divine feet with joy and emotion, as a friend of God. For Matthew also says this about her and about that other Mary, those who seized His feet and worshiped Him (Matt. 28:9).

But others say that He elevates us, after this word of our Lord, to a higher and more sublime thought. For when Mary approached Him with more ardor, and to ask something divine, she wanted the reason for the resurrection to be revealed to her, and she returned to touch the depth of this conduct toward us. Jesus said to her, He who knows the hidden things of the heart: "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). For, as He had promised to His disciples that after the ascent to heaven, by the coming of the Holy Spirit, His teaching and

revelation of the mystery would be brought to perfection, He had said: “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:26); and again: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:12-13). This is why He says: “Do not touch me” (John 20:17), that is, do not scrutinize, do not seek the reason concerning what you have come to ask. “Do not touch me” (John 20:17). Their time has not yet come. “For I have not yet ascended to the Father. But I will ascend, and then, when the Spirit comes, He will teach you, as He also promised me”; for it is something like this that Mary wanted to ask our Lord to learn. This is clearly known because when she approached Him, she had not called Him Lord, but Rabboni, that is, Teacher (John 20:16). “I call you, saying: Teacher, because I am eager to be instructed”; but He who directs His words with discernment to teach, sets aside her (question) as being inopportune; and no one will say that it is not credible that this woman is so enamored of knowledge, for it is especially among women that this curiosity is found, even among the virtuous.

Our Lord makes known that those who were His disciples were also enamored of knowledge, testifying to this desire for knowledge concerning Mary, the sister of Martha, when He saw that, not being satisfied with His instructions, she remained attached to Him, and He said to her: “But Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42); but no one else also came to oppose because Mary did not approach, when our Lord promised the apostles the coming of the Paraclete and the perfect teaching; He had not said it to her; she did not know it; He knows, He who speaks not according to the ignorance of those who listen, but according to His familiar knowledge: such was the custom of our Lord in speaking and answering. Thus, to Nicodemus who did not know, He said: “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). In the same way, to that Samaritan woman, who did not know, He also said: “But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst” (John 4:14). But why should I speak of the Samaritan woman, when it is the same for the disciples themselves, who did not know what they had heard concerning most of the words He said to them: as where He said to them: “I have

food to eat of which you do not know" (John 4:32); and in another passage again, John the Evangelist indicates that the disciples said: "We do not know what He is saying" (John 16:18); and again in this account of the donkey and the branches, He says: "His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him" (John 12:16).

Thus here also, to Mary who desired to learn what she wanted to ask, even without knowing it, He who knows all things before they are, said to her: "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). Perhaps indeed, if Mary had known, like the apostles, this promise concerning the Spirit and this referral to a more perfect teaching, she would not have tried to learn what the time had not permitted her? But now she was trying to learn, as one who did not know. But our Lord, as the one who knows, gave an answer, but it is not because of her ignorance that He also had forgotten His own words. Admitting, therefore, this second explanation which aims at what is higher, we do not despise the first, for we also say that Mary touched Jesus in a sensible way, and at the same time that the request, by the fact that she called Him Teacher, she also touched Him spiritually; and we believe, not in vain, that both (explanations) exist. Such is what it seemed to us to say, concerning what had been proposed to explain in these verses.

But this verse of the apostle also seems to me to suit well the victory against the rebels of our Christ-loving emperor, namely that which has now been announced to us: "Bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but piety is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). For it is not everything to trust in bodily and military exercise and in the preparation of armaments; this is of little use; how much more, that piety and the orthodoxy of the faith be strengthened on all sides and possess the (full) light, undergoing no transformation, that it be known that the Word of God is one, in truth, and that without any change, He was incarnate and made man and voluntarily suffered in His flesh; that one also flee this Jewish division of the duality of natures after the divine and ineffable union, and the error of these dreams of the imagination of Eutyches and this senseless lack of intelligence of Apollinaris, for these inept and stupid fables have made our Savior either a man clothed with God, or an imagination, or a being without intelligence, according to

what seems good to them, and not, according to the divine Scripture: the perfect God who was made perfectly man, so that He granted us a perfect and flawless healing, for those who were sick and corrupted by sin, for whom He humbled Himself to be incarnate and took it upon Himself also to suffer. This is why, in truth and not as under a deceitful appearance which would be mockery in our eyes, because of this attitude of the pious emperor, look on high and sing with the prophet David: “For I will not trust in my bow, nor shall my sword save me” (Ps. 44:6), “but Your right hand and Your arm” (Ps. 98:1) “and the light of Your countenance” (Ps. 89:15), “through You we will push down our enemies; through Your name we will trample those who rise up against us” (Ps. 44:5); and this, not only in words, but also in deeds, makes him comparable to David. For as he, when he devastated Sheol, avenged someone of his race and reduced the opposition to nothing, so also the revolt and iniquity of yore, he has seized them in his hands, delivered and restored to life. To one, despite his great lack of intelligence, he has shown mercy; the other has been unmasked, has fled, and has perished; but may the other be worthy, by his piety, peace, and charity, of the kingdom here below as of that of heaven. “For piety is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). May we all be worthy of it by the grace and charity of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever! Amen!

**HOMILY 46 WHY WE CELEBRATE THE DAY OF MID-PENTECOST AND ON THE READING THAT IS FITTING, FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, SAYING: "BEHOLD, THEN, WHEN IT WAS ALREADY THE MIDDLE OF THE FEAST OF PENTECOST, JESUS WENT UP TO THE TEMPLE AND TAUGHT" (JOHN 7:14), AND THE REST…****TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Let no one take us for unbalanced people because we celebrate this Mid-Pentecost, for we celebrate it not as scrutinizers or as thoughtless dabblers, but with divine charity, showing that after having received with faith the grace of the resurrection, having tasted it as a most savory food, having ground it under our teeth, having absorbed it into our stomach, and having felt its sweetness even more, we return to that same first taste, desiring and loving in thought what at the beginning we honored with our faith. In the same way indeed, when we arrive at the completion of something truly beautiful and good, we feel no satiety, because what is truly loved by people, when they obtain what they desired, they love it and prefer nothing inferior to it, and they burn again with the desire (they had for it). But that what is in the middle should be honored as much as the beginning and the end, the Law also makes this known to us, since it commands and teaches that feasts must be celebrated three times a year, namely: "You shall keep for me the feast of weeks" (Exodus 23:14) at the beginning of the wheat harvest, and: "A feast of the harvest must be celebrated in the middle of the year," says (the Law). But this feast is not commanded for any other reason than that, with the feasts being so close in time, we can never stop or cease to celebrate God and remember Him, so true is it that a feast is the remembrance of God, according to the word of the psalmist David: "I remembered God and rejoiced in Him" (Psalm 77:3).

But let us see what Jesus spoke to the Jews when it was the middle of the feast, and what He had at heart to set right among the words He had said. This dividing wall (Ephesians 2:14), as Paul says, He had at heart to destroy, abolishing by (His) commandments the law of precepts (Ephesians 2:15). For the Law was a barrier given for observation and observance, and as something that enclosed, confined, and hindered man through legislation. But a dividing wall distinguished and separated Israel from the Gentiles, even though, on the one hand, by race they were equal, fashioned from the same clay, rich in the same image of God, and living as

brothers in one house in this world; and on the other hand, by the Law, they were separated by a dividing wall. Was it not then just that, through a feast, this dividing wall should be destroyed? Jesus also says in the Gospels: "I have not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it" (Matthew 5:17). But see in what this destruction consists, and do not be troubled by what has been said, namely that the law of precepts was abolished by the commandments. For the Law had a double (aspect): one superficial, apparent, and external, showing the written precept; the other hiding in depth the spiritual teaching. The spirit of the Law having been shown and revealed in this way by its fulfillment in the Gospel by our Savior, the written precept was left in shadow by Him. For while the Lawgiver through Moses said: "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13), Christ, who is the understanding of the Law and gives its spirit, would command in vain: "Do not be angry with your brother" (Matthew 5:22), since it is in this especially that He fulfills what the Law intends, for by first drawing attention to anger, where murder is germinating, He also achieves what He had foreseen with such care. Likewise, the (commandment) "You shall not kill," He enhances it all the more by making it something that will fade into shadow and be hidden, thanks to a more important commandment: for indeed, he who does not even allow himself to be angry will never go so far as to kill. Similarly, when He condemns the impure and vain gaze that tends toward lust and is drawn by it, He also "fulfills" and destroys the (commandment) "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). For the Law being spiritual (Romans 7:14), our Lord on the one hand fulfills it by the newness of the spirit (Romans 7:6), and on the other hand abolishes it by the oldness of the letter (Romans 7:6). It is by what made it ancient and old that it was very near to being destroyed, and this pleased Paul the truthful, who very well said: "It was near to being destroyed" (not a direct quote from Paul), and not: "It was completely destroyed," for, the understanding of the Law having gained, the Law seemed to him to persist; but it also seemed to him destroyed, because the written precept seemed superfluous.

It is as if someone, having drawn a circle on a table, would be said to destroy the sketch (of this circle) that resembled a shadow by applying colors that would be added to it. On the one hand, he destroys it because this first sketch appears obscured; on the other hand, however, it remains because it appears brighter, thanks to the beauty of the colors placed upon it. Such is also what Christ revealed and showed in what now appears evident. For when the Jews reproached Him as

someone who had destroyed the Law, because, to that man paralyzed in his joints and bodily members, who lay on a stretcher, He had ordered him to take up his bed on the Sabbath day and walk (John 5:8-9) at the moment when He went up to the temple, He taught what precisely it belonged to Jesus alone to teach, namely this God who became incarnate, and He astonished His accusers to the point that, all amazed, they said: "How does this man know letters, having never studied?" (John 7:15). Therefore, He should not be accused in any way, because, in every way, He surpassed the Law, He who did not need to learn it to teach others. That is why, when He became incarnate and came into all these things that are subject to human dimensions and familiarized Himself with what is ours to make it His own, sin excepted, to the point of even submitting to conception, birth, swaddling clothes, the size (of a child), food, growth, (yet) He did not begin the study of letters (John 7:15). He wanted to show thereby that He had nothing to share with others, that is, nothing to receive, whether as a gift from God as to a man, or as teaching or approval by miracles, except that He was the essential Wisdom of the Father and (His) Power (1 Corinthians 1:24): all that He does, all that He says, it is from Himself as God, being so by nature. At the same time, He also shows that this grace that Adam possessed at the beginning before the serpent's deceit, He came to restore it to our race, because He does not need the help of the written Law. It is for this reason also that He chose disciples who did not know letters, and for this that He also said: "My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me" (John 7:16): first, when He evades the accusation imputed to Him of being against God; second, when He gives us an example of moderation and humility; third, what is even more truthful, when He rebukes the pusillanimous spirit of the Jews, saying: "Do you think that my teaching is from me as from a man? That is why you are astonished: How is it that I know letters without having studied?" (John 7:15).

But if you were pure in your actions, (like) those who do the will of God, you could examine even the smallest (of my actions), you would know that, being the Word and the true Son of the Father, I teach without needing to study, and you would not be astonished that I know letters without having studied; you would not think either that my teaching is from me as from a man, but that it is from the Father, for all that is the Son's is the Father's (John 17:10), just as all that is the Father's is the Son's, since it is the same essence, that is, the divinity. If it were my teaching, as you think, in any case I would have human feelings and would expect,

from my action, a personal glory (John 7:18). But, being God by nature, I became man without change, and voluntarily I descended to all this humility, not that I came to need glory, which is why I do not seek it, but I make it return to Him who sent me, and when I have accomplished the Economy, I will also share in the glory with Him. For I glorify myself in Him as a Son; it is known therefore first that as it is so for me, I am raised above this Law that was given to you by me. How then do you reproach me for transgressing it, when you exalt Moses everywhere, and how do you pass yourselves off as defenders of the Law, when you do not fulfill its commandments? Well then! I will show you clearly that, in what seems to you a transgression, I fulfill the Law. For if, in any case, you decree that whatever is done on the Sabbath day is a violation of the Law, how then, when God commanded these Fathers of the house of Abraham: "On the eighth day you must circumcise every male" (Genesis 17:12): if the eighth day falls on a Sabbath, the man is nevertheless circumcised, when precisely you should abolish this and not circumcise, since the Sabbath is honored by all work ceasing (Leviticus 23:3)? But it is well known that the Sabbath opposes not what regards the spiritual worship relative to the salvation of the soul, but what relates to the body, that is, the carnal satisfaction of passions and a material enterprise of this world, like a manual trade and what the Law calls servile work, saying: "Do no work" (Exodus 20:10). By clarifying this (point) with another passage, it says: "Do no work" (Deuteronomy 5:14), but, whatever is done for any living being, let that alone be done by you. That is why for the sheep or the ox that had fallen into a pit (Matthew 12:11), it was permitted on the Sabbath to pull them out; in the same way also, circumcision, having in view the spiritual profit of the soul, was practiced on the Sabbath day and with full right. For, (for) the one who is circumcised, the man of pleasure and sleep (Genesis 27:1), who is destroyed, he rejects it far from himself, by rejecting the foreskin, which is for him the type of holy baptism: by it, when we strip off the old man, we put on the spiritual and new man, by putting on Christ (Ephesians 4:24; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 3:10).

This is also what Paul says when he wrote to the Colossians: "In Him you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism" (Colossians 2:11-12). See with what wisdom our Lord spoke to the Jews: "If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses may not

be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a whole man well?" (John 7:23); and, while circumcision seemed to violate the Law more, because it cut off and abolished the Sabbath, for Him, while He tells you that you judge according to the flesh, you say that there seems to be there a destruction of the Law, when it is rather a resurrection, since it is fulfilled spiritually.

But there is yet another deeper meaning considered thereby: for it is by this circumcision that was first the type of baptism and that was accomplished on the eighth day, that is, precisely the first (day) of the week, that the Sabbath was well extinguished and purified by its abolition. For just as the shadow will not purify the reality, since it is the latter that accomplishes it, so the Gospel does not make the Law rest. Our Savior says these words and similar ones and divine thoughts, while the Jews wanted to kill Him and breathed a savage anger: they sought to seize Him, but no one said: "Lay hands on Him," because His hour had not yet come (John 7:30); but this was said, not in the manner of the deliriums and follies of the sages of this world, like a fate and a fatal decree of a certain hour judged such by the one they called an augur, because He approached this suffering by the force (of things), but—one must be well instructed by the adversary—while the Jews had many times wanted to take Him against His will, they had not taken Him, but it was when He willed it and at the hour He approved and when He thought it was the right hour for Him to suffer; for, all (the hours), from the beginning, He arranged and prepared them in their proper time; just as the Law had to be given, but at the proper time, so also the prophets and the Gospel. Therefore, by this name of hour, is signified the diligence of the care and wisdom of our Savior, such that no portion of this time is interchangeable, and that even the smallest instant of time, outside its time, can in no way arrive or go astray, but He directs all according to order and propriety. Otherwise, how would it not be a nameless folly to say that the creator of the worlds and times was subjected to the fatality of the hour, when even for us this must not be thinkable?

Therefore, at Cana of Galilee, when the wine ran out for those who drank at the wedding, while His mother begged Him to show a miracle worthy of God, He cried out: "What is it to me and to you, woman? My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4), and immediately He changed the water into wine. Now, if He had said: "The hour is not near," like someone who was forcibly subjected to the necessity of the

hours, He could not at the same time immediately perform a sign. But He accomplished the miracle as one who has the power and who is God; and on the other hand, His mother, who had human feelings and had pushed Him (to act) out of ostentation, He corrected her by the words He said to her and taught her that it was not out of ostentation, but at their hours and their moments, that He had to perform such miracles: while He was ashamed of the unbelief of the Jews, and He led and directed them to make Himself known. But He nevertheless accomplished what had been asked of Him, by honoring His mother, by blessing the feast more fully, by teaching at the same time to answer and obey mothers and by esteeming marriage honorable and the bed pure; let them therefore hear, those who despise their mothers, that Christ, while He was God and creator, was venerated by His mother, even when she made an untimely request, and that He answered her, obeyed her, and let Himself be persuaded, since He established for us laws to be honored by the (law of) nature!

But, to return to the question posed at the beginning, I am astonished at the blindness of the Jews: how, while they condemned these words of our Savior (which were) divine and above man, by which they should have recognized that He was the Christ, the one who had been foretold beforehand by the Law and the prophets, they were hesitant. Sometimes they said: "This man, we know where He is from, but when the Christ comes, no one will know where He is from" (John 7:27); sometimes reflecting again, they said: "Is there not a Scripture that says that the Christ comes from the offspring of David and from the village of Bethlehem, where David was?" But it is beautiful that, concerning one of these doubtful questions, one decides in the evangelical manner and says: "Blind Jew, put together these two doubtful questions, and in the middle between the two, you will clearly see the Christ, whom you touch, whom you hold in your hands, without recognizing Him. For, according to your hesitation, He Himself says to you: 'No one knows where the Christ comes from: He is from above, and it is from the Father that He holds His generation that men can neither understand nor know'; on the other hand, He came, in the flesh, from David and from Bethlehem: see how the prophet Micah expressed the two things together: 'And you, Bethlehem, house of Ephrathah, are you little to be among the clans of Judah? From you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days'" (Micah 5:2). The prophet Isaiah also, when he says that He has

sprung from the Virgin Mother of God, says in turn: "Who shall declare His generation?" (Isaiah 53:8). For it is also the same, who cannot be counted among the generations, since He is God, and of whom the carnal generation has also been written. But the Jews, while they angered God from this Scripture, which they should have recognized, added to ignorance and darkness, by partially invoking the prophecies, as is also the custom among heretics, who, in the Jewish manner, cut up the inspired words of God and weave the threads of perverse dogmas, two things that David prophetically cursed by saying: "Let their table become a snare before them, and for retribution and a stumbling block let their eyes be darkened so that they may not see" (Psalm 69:22-23)! That the words of God be a table and a reasonable food, the divine book suggests by saying: "Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him" (Exodus 19:7). Matthew also speaks similarly by repeating the teachings of our Savior: "He put another parable before them" (Matthew 13:31), but the word that He put before them is similar and testifies that it includes a table, and that it is a food that can nourish the soul. Let us pray to Him, that we may partake of it with purity and perfection, that we may gather its fruits and be illuminated by His light, by the grace and charity of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father and to the Holy Spirit be glory for ever and ever. Amen!

## HOMILY 47 ON THE ASCENSION OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST (THE SECOND HOMILY). TABLE OF CONTENTS

For me, when I reflect on the magnificence of the present day, I have no reason to remain silent before (such) a marvel. Indeed, He who descended into the lower regions of the earth has ascended above all the heavens (Ephesians 4:9-10). But what then shall I do? Shall I praise the charity of this descent? Or shall I extol the divine greatness of the ascent? Indeed, it is necessary both to praise the former and to glorify the latter, but to make absolutely no investigation (into either); for the manner of the descent is incomprehensible, just as the marvel of the ascent is equally impenetrable. For where, then, did He descend, He who is present in every place? Or where did He ascend, He who fills all things? If, on the one hand, (He did so) incorporeally, (He goes) nowhere. For where will He go or depart, He who is infinite and unlimited and who is contained in no place? Indeed, He encompasses and contains all things within Himself. But if, on the other hand, He came corporeally—for the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14)—when, without change and without being contained, He united Himself hypostatically to the flesh that has a rational soul and remained what He was, even after He became man, He entered the earth as the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29), and He ascended, being Himself thus, that is, incarnate, above all the heavens, as the only-begotten Son of the Father (Ephesians 4:10; John 1:24).

For Paul, speaking of Christ to the Colossians, wrote: “In Him dwells bodily the fullness of the Godhead” (Colossians 2:9), that is: it is not a partial operation of the Word, as in the prophets, but it is the Word of God Himself, (and) this in fullness and living and in person; not, in dwelling, as by a love of friendship, by grace and by participation, but by "incorporating" Himself, that is, by incarnating Himself, according to the essence in truth and by a natural union; for this is indeed what it means to dwell bodily. And that the word "dwelling" is often also said of those who are united hypostatically, Paul has attested, he who writes concerning our body: “If our earthly house of the body is destroyed” (2 Corinthians 5:6); one of Job’s friends also (speaks) in the same manner, saying concerning all men: “And how much more to those who dwell in houses of clay” (Job 4:19), of the same clay from which we too are made. And let no one be troubled by this reflection: "If Christ is

the Word of God who became incarnate, what other (being) exists outside of Him, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells?"

Indeed, the divine book sometimes also names the part after the whole, just as Paul also called the soul "the inner man" and the body "the outer man"; and although man taken in his totality is not a part, but a single hypostasis which (is) of two, yet it is not because in truth one has spoken of the inner man and the outer man that we understand this one being (as) two men. And one can also see a similar manner of expression in what is said according to the prophet David: “At night I meditated with my heart” (Psalm 77:7). Indeed, of whom else is it said for the one who meditated with his heart, if not that he speaks of his own heart, in which he himself turned over (his) thoughts? For it is not because there is a manner of speaking as if to two persons that we would therefore think that this one (being) is two hearts. Likewise James also, in writing the Catholic Epistle, said concerning our soul: “The Spirit He has made to dwell in us desires; but He gives a grace that is more abundant” (James 4:5-6). And yet we are one man who (is composed) of a soul and a body. What other soul, then, or (what other) spirit has He made to dwell in us? But it is certain that He said: “In us”, when He ought to have said: "In the body," when, instead of signifying the part, He used the name of the whole; and what He says is of this sort: "The Spirit who is in us desires ardently the familiarity with God, turning away from the love of the world, and He (God) gives a grace that is greater than the desire." In the same manner, the prophet Zechariah also says: “He who formed the spirit of man within him” (Zechariah 12:1). Indeed, what other spirit outside of man will one understand to have been formed in him? But let us not look at the manner of expression, but considering the nature of the facts, let us understand that the one of whom it is spoken is one and not two, because in truth the man (who is) of two is a single person and a single hypostasis.

But when I speak amid these subjects, the greatness of the gift awakens and lifts me up, and before the richness of the charity that concerns us, I am in admiration, seeing today that He who took the seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:16), He who (came) from the root of Jesse and David, He who sprang from the Holy Spirit and the virginal womb, He who (was) in the conception, He who (was) in the birth, He who (was) in Bethlehem, He who (was) in the swaddling clothes, He who (was) in

the manger, He who (was) in the growth of bodily stature, and—this comes last and is most remarkable—He who (was) on the cross, He who (was) in the tomb, He who was in Sheol itself, (seeing, I say, that He) has surpassed the heavens, the principalities, the powers, the virtues, the thrones, the dominions (Ephesians 1:21), that He has surpassed in running all the intelligible creation, and that He has ascended to the highest and most royal throne of all, and that He is seated there together with the Father. And indeed, "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at My right hand" (Psalm 110:1), the divine David himself, who sings prophetically, meant to say. What then shall we say concerning these (words), if not that, without contradiction, great is the mystery of godliness (1 Timothy 3:16), which indeed, without needing any verbal artifice, by the fact of the preaching, drives out the inventions of heresies and shows the truth in a clear and luminous manner, brighter than all. For if among the words of the Economy, there was nothing worthy of God, nothing that showed that Emmanuel Himself is God—neither the extraordinary star that shone as if to light the steps of the magi and lead them to the adoration of Him who was born, nor the gifts (they offered) indicating that the one they honored is God and king (for there was gold and silver, but they also had myrrh, a sign of the voluntary and life-giving three-day burial), nor the healing of sufferings of every kind, and the restoration, that is, the return to integrity, of necessary and most fitting members, (accomplished) with a power worthy of the Creator, nor the rebukes to the sea and the winds, and the marvelous walking on the liquid element, nor the loaves, sometimes seven and sometimes five, that fed many thousands (of people)—and from the fragments that remained, abundant streams flow—nor the resurrection of the dead that occurred astonishingly at a simple command, nor the sun that at the crucifixion set at noon, then relit its rays and finally set according to the decrees and laws fixed for it and established from the beginning to give way to evening, nor the earth that trembled, the rocks that split, the sealed and guarded tomb, conquered by the resurrection and making life spring forth instead of corruption—if there were not these things and others even more numerous, the fact of being seated at the right hand of the Father proclaims that Jesus is God and shuts the gaping and impudent mouths of those who distort the profession of the orthodox faith.

For how will those who imagine and teach the folly of Arius say that the Word of God is a creature, if they come to consider that He who is incomprehensible and

inaccessible to the creatures is seated on the throne elevated above all? “The Lord, indeed, said to my Lord: Sit at My right hand” (Psalm 110:1). And the creature is a servant, not a master, so that in truth, if He were not Lord by nature, and of the same essence and royalty and glory as the Father also, the throne would not receive Him, since He would be absolutely out of place and foreign. And these same opinions also condemn those who say two natures after the ineffable union, this one our Lord and our God Jesus Christ. For if He is not one (single) nature and one hypostasis incarnate of God the Word, it is of absolute necessity that from then on we falsely add a fourth person to the Trinity; for duality establishes each nature to itself, apart and by itself, and once the human nature is distinct from the Word, it will necessarily be attributed a proper person; and, in turn, the royal throne will drive out the one who is absolutely out of place and foreign, and not only as foreign but also as superfluous; for how is he not superfluous who makes the Trinity a quaternity, and who introduces and makes dwell in heaven a man who was made God, and who counts him at the same time as the uncreated and adorable creature, and who suddenly creates and composes a new God, just as the pagans are accustomed to fabricate and falsely call gods those whom they seek among men and make ascend to heaven?

But such is not the portion of Jacob, says Jeremiah, “because He who formed the universe is Himself his inheritance; His name is the Lord of hosts” (Jeremiah 10:16). And indeed, it is not after having grown in virtue and come to maturity among men that Christ was called God; but on the contrary, it is when, being God by nature as the Word, He emptied Himself (Philippians 2:7), when without change He made Himself man, when He became incarnate and was made man of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin, holy and Mother of God, after having united, according to the hypostasis, the body that is consubstantial with us and endowed with a soul and intelligence—excluding sin—so that, from the whole human composite, He might erase the fault of Adam, because, one of two, that is, of the divinity and the humanity, He is one person, one hypostasis.

This is why there is no other who has ascended into heaven except He who descended from it; for He who descended, He Himself, is also the One who ascended above all the heavens (Ephesians 4:10), (as) we hear Paul cry out. And although it was without flesh that He descended and with flesh that He ascended,

yet by the fact that He is one, even so, it is He and not another who has ascended. But if He is in two natures, according to the fables of the worship of man, it is another whom the Word has made to ascend with Him, and the one who did not descend will be found to have ascended. But, as He is one, the eternal throne also has received Him according to custom, as He is before the ages. He meant: "Your throne, O God, is forever" (Psalm 45:7); and the blessed hosts and the intellectual and immaterial spirits profess that He is the King of glory and their Lord, and (this) not simply, but pointing as if with a finger, because He was incarnate, He who was once invisible; when these asked peremptorily: "Who is this King of glory?" (Psalm 24:8), those answered very clearly: "He is the King of glory" (Psalm 24:10), so that we might think that He is one and the same, and not another and another. Thus He has raised us up with Him and made us sit together with Him (Ephesians 2:6), when He incarnated the flesh that is consubstantial with us. Indeed, if the flesh itself were of another essence or if it were some imagination without hypostasis, it would therefore rather be other things, I mean shadows and hallucinations, that He would have made to sit together with Him, and not us. Yet the apostle, he, says in truth that we ourselves have been raised and have sat together with Him. And he would not have said this if He had not united to Himself this body that is ours, and not another.

O ineffable charity! O honor with which we have been honored! Indeed, from the beginning, when He brought us from nothingness into existence, it is in this clay that is ours and in an earthen vessel that He placed a rational soul and His own particular image, and He perfected man. But because what is earthly prevailed over what is superior, and the beauty of the image was obscured by carnal life, the Word, the Creator, in making Himself man, makes us all ascend, with the very clay and with the image, to heaven—or rather to the throne that is above the heavens. Why then do we, who have been honored with such an honor, still doubt the kingdom of heaven that is promised to us, when we have up there the firstfruits of our race, and by them it is as if we have a pasture in heaven and graze there? Yet, O man, when you buy a field, as soon as you take possession of a meadow, you do not hesitate in the least, you do not doubt that it belongs to you, and then you strive to maintain it. But while you have a meadow in heaven, you take no pains for heavenly things, but you look downward, going to and fro on the earth like the worms of the earth, remaining attached to the stench of this world and

enclosing (Colossians 3:13) your intellect in ephemeral concerns. But let us hear Paul tell us what (this) cultivation is, that is, the working of heavenly things, and let us apply ourselves joyfully to it so as to obtain eternal goods. “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God: set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth; for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:1-3). This is the cultivation and the working; and what is the reward? “When, he says, Christ, our life, is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:4). Indeed, to Him be glory forever. Amen!

## HOMILY 48 ON PENTECOST (THOUGH IT WAS DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING WEEK ON FRIDAY, THE FAST HAVING BEEN ANNOUNCED BEFOREHAND ACCORDING TO CUSTOM.) TABLE OF CONTENTS

Isaiah, who, of all the prophets, is the most elegant and sublime in his language and who foretold the mystery of the Gospel in an evangelical rather than prophetic manner, saw that Emmanuel, seated on a high and lofty throne (Isaiah 6:1), is, on the one hand, celebrated as the Lord of hosts by the seraphim and, on the other hand, placed as a coal upon the altar. Now, it is with great aptness that the coal prefigured the Word who, for us, without change, became incarnate and was made man: such is Emmanuel. For just as wood, mingled with fire, burning intensely and receiving the flame into its depths, becomes, as one thinks, entirely fire, and this without ceasing to be wood or rejecting its own nature, but, as one believes, is inseparably one, called a coal—a thing and name indivisible—performing what is proper to fire, namely to illuminate and to burn—so too, when the Word of God was united to the flesh, (born) of the Holy Spirit and Mary, possessing a rational soul, and was united not simply but by hypostatic union, so that He Himself is understood to have truly become incarnate and been made man, on the one hand He preserved the flesh, which is precisely what it was, without changing it into His own nature or changing Himself into its nature, and on the other hand, being united once indivisibly, He is one, as one thinks, with the flesh, and He operates and deposits in it all that is proper to Him, so that it heals, creates, and gives life, because, in truth, it has become the very body of the creative and life-giving Word, a divine and intellectual coal. This is why (this flesh), on the one hand, by giving saliva (John 9:6) for the man blind from birth, truly restored pupils to him; on the other hand, by crying out with words articulated by the tongue: “Lazarus, come forth” (John 11:43), it raised the dead man of four days, who was bound by the chains of the tomb and smelled of decay; it walked on the sea as on land; it performed corporeally other (actions) of this kind, which are in truth proper to the divine essence alone. This coal, the prophet says that one of the seraphim took it from the altar, brought it near to him, touched his mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips, and it takes away your iniquities and purifies your sins” (Isaiah 6:6-7). Indeed, (the Word) truly purifies the lips of those who believe in Him with their heart for righteousness and confess Him with their mouth for

salvation (Romans 10:10), and who redden their tongue with (their) blood; for this is the purification and ignition of this coal: thus (speaks) the prophet. But the Jews, who lack all sense and who are most unbelieving and blinded by the veil over their heart, while seeing manifestly the coal sparkling with divine signs and illuminating with teachings and destroying by composition the matter of sin, as it is written: "Our God is a consuming fire" (Deuteronomy 4:24), and saying: "Your sins are forgiven" (Matthew 9:2), and: "The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (Matthew 9:6), did not believe that God Himself, the one who speaks, behold, He is near them and manifestly appears on earth and converses with men (Baruch 3:38). But, being scandalized by Him when He appears and thinking that He is only a man and not also God, they themselves, from the cornerstone, the chosen, the precious stone, made themselves a rock of scandal, as it is written, and a stumbling block (1 Peter 2:6-7), gaping before Moses and before the summit of Mount Sinai, and growing proud with a somewhat haughty and arrogant spirit, saying with open mouth: "It is to us that God spoke on the mountain in the fire" (Deuteronomy 4:15): as for Him, we do not know where He comes from (John 9:29).

This is why the Holy Spirit, muzzling their uncircumcised mouth and the folly of their mind, burst upon the apostles with tongues of fire, making known that the one who spoke with Moses on the mountain was also the one who, according to the Economy, arose and appeared as a coal, and not as the fire itself, and (who) partook of blood and flesh in the same way as we do (Hebrews 2:14), excluding sin, and (who) did not reject the fact of being God, even at the very moment He became man, so as to be accessible and to appear to all men, and so that, purifying ourselves, we might grasp Him with the tongs of knowledge, as the prophet saw one of the seraphim do. Indeed, if He appeared in humility for this reason—namely, to be accessible to you—He Himself attested this to you when He was transfigured on the mountain and made the ray of His own divinity shine forth, and immediately restrained and held it back. Because the disciples who had gone up with Him could not endure it, they bowed to the ground and fell; and after closing their eyes, they fixed their faces to the ground, until this charitable one drew near again to those who could not approach Him and said to them sweetly as He raised them: "Rise, and do not be afraid" (Matthew 17:7).

But if the very mode of self-emptying and humility of the Economy seems to you, O Jew, a scandal, and if, because of this very thing by which you ought to have attained the knowledge of God, you revolt and flee, and if, under the pretext of charity, you diminish what is greatness, as does the one whose greatness has no measure (Psalm 145:3), as the prophet says, consider the coming of the Spirit—divine and exalted above all—and recall Mount Sinai (for I too wish to do so) and compare with this "pedagogical" fire (παιδαγωγικὸν), that is, which leads children and is an initiation, like the letters (of the alphabet), this perfect fire filled with spiritual and sublime contemplation. For at that time, did He not approach you as subjects and people enslaved to their desires, who needed fear and blows, and who could scarcely be purified for three days, and who were ordered not even to touch the mountain but were driven far away because of their animal and irrational life? “For even if a wild beast”, he says, “approaches the mountain, it shall be stoned; if it is a domestic animal, it shall not live” (Exodus 19:13). This is why everything then aimed at terror and dread: darkness, gloom, a thick cloud, and the sound of trumpets that shook the ears, and the vapor, and the thick smoke rising as from a blazing furnace, and noises somewhat unknown, and fleeting lightning, and a cloud—that one dark—which hid the mountain. In short, there was (there) all that fills with fright and fear, to the point that Moses too could say: “I am in fear and trembling” (Hebrews 12:21), “for terrible was what appeared” (Hebrews 12:21), as the apostle says. He said very well: “appeared”, and not: "was understood," or: "was known." For it was a “φαντασία”, that is, an appearance, a likeness, a shadow, and a prefiguration—as in an image—of future things and of those that were to be revealed in Christ, things that in the Law were then shown obscurely.

Come then and, in contrast to this, weigh the dwelling of the Holy Spirit. The apostles did not need to ascend a mountain. For they had already ascended to the summit of perfection, having been both with God and the Word; and they were filled with divine teaching, having been purified not just for three days but having cast away all the defilement of the world and said to their master: “Behold, we have left everything and followed You” (Matthew 19:27). This is why it was necessarily when they were at home and in the upper room where they were staying, as the book of Acts says, that the Paraclete came upon them, so as to make it clear that He came as to friends, as a friend and mysteriously, and not as to servants, to frighten, as a master. For it is to friends, in the upper room and in the

locked chamber, that someone speaks familiarly, speaking between Himself and them, to share with them unspeakable things and secrets. This is why our Lord Himself said to them: “You are My friends. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you” (John 15:14-15). And Paul too, sending a letter to the Romans, wrote: “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry: Abba, Father!” (Romans 8:15). “And suddenly”, he says, “there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting, and divided tongues as of fire appeared to them” (Acts 2:2-3). And (coming) from heaven first, to show clearly that it is from heaven that the descent of the Spirit takes place in a divine manner, who came as a mighty wind, because He was going to make those who would receive the grace of adoption the violent (Matthew 11:12) of the kingdom of heaven. And He filled the entire house, to show that the gift was not given partially to some but to the whole body of the Church. And there were tongues that appeared (as) of fire, signifying that between the old legislation and the new, there was an interval and a distance as great as between articulate speech pronounced by the tongue with the voice and the indistinct sound of trumpets. There, in the form of lightning, the fire, as soon as it appeared, vanished in flight; here, tongues of fire settled upon the apostles, and at that very moment, they were filled with the Spirit, because divine streams flowed abundantly and overflowed; and they had the flame of grace that had settled upon them, not in passing but forming their tongues for every kind of language, not remaining hidden in darkness and gloom but shining at the third hour in broad daylight; and this as if to show that, by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the mystery of the Trinity was revealed clearly and as in broad daylight.

This is why it was not Israel alone, a single people, that they instructed and taught, but, arriving in the air like birds, they traversed the whole earth (Zechariah 1:10), and they taught, so to speak, all mankind, and suddenly transformed it. And who were they? They were ignorant men, who had busied themselves with the lake and fishing, assiduously, and, to put it briefly, they were just as learned and skilled as the fish of their catch, voiceless. And indeed it was not they who spoke, but the Spirit, who looked upon (Acts 2:3) and changed their tongues, so that they might speak to all peoples according to the language of their fathers and their own idiom,

and persuade all men to know and confess the one God who is in the adorable and venerable Holy Trinity, and to receive the law of the Gospel, and to submit to its yoke, as our Savior also says in the Gospels: “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:29-30). This was indeed the marvel that long before the prophet Zephaniah foresaw and foretold in the name of the Spirit who spoke in him: “I will change the speech of the peoples into a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve Him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Cush My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering” (Zephaniah 3:9-10). For all who dwell at the ends of the earth and who, having been submerged in the rivers of sin and moist desires, had become black in their understanding, as if they were Ethiopians, ran to the apostles and to the teaching of the Spirit. And when they were enlightened in the eye of their mind, cleansed and washed with water, and purified with fire by the bath of regeneration, they offered sacrifices of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that confess His name (Hebrews 13:15), as Paul says somewhere.

But this change of tongues, which the prophecy so clearly foretold and which is in some way divine and extraordinary, was called drunkenness by the Jews who grew up with the prophets, having seen it with their eyes, perceived it with their rebellious and deaf ears, and they said of the apostles: “They are filled with new wine” (Acts 2:13), though they said this in a blasphemous spirit and with an insulting mouth, and, without realizing it, in their blasphemies they spoke the truth. For the new wine is that new wine which is the new teaching of the Spirit, of which the apostles became the vessels, having been delivered from their former depravity by the instruction of our Savior and having become new; it is concerning them, because at first they were imperfect, that to John’s disciples who asked: “Why do they not fast?” He said: “No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins, it will be spilled, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved” (Matthew 9:16-17). Indeed, in many passages of the divine Book, the word of teaching is called wine, as it is said in the Psalms: “You have given us wine of compunction to drink” (Psalm 60:3), and as was written by Isaiah to Jerusalem concerning those who taught abominations and mingled divine commandments

with human (prescriptions) leading to worldly dissipation: “Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water” (Isaiah 1:22). When, therefore, the preachers of the new grace had been filled with this new and heavenly drink and had poured it into the cup of their doctrine, they transformed the whole earth, drunk, staggering, and reeling from the drunkenness of demons, and brought it to awaken to the knowledge of the one and only God; and by the fire of the dogmas of piety they dried up the river of shameful desires that had then submerged the world, instructing and teaching courage, chastity, total endurance, and the ascetic life; and by this they utterly burned all idols and all ancient cults.

I therefore liken this intellectual fire that destroys impiety to the fire recounted in the story that descended upon the sacrifice of the prophet Elijah and refuted the false prophets; concerning it, it is written: “And fire fell from heaven from the Lord and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the water that was upon it, and the water of the sea” (1 Kings 18:38); “and the fire licked up the stones and the dust; and all the people fell on their faces and said: Truly the Lord God, He is God” (1 Kings 18:38-39). Likewise also the fiery word of the Spirit, after descending from heaven upon the earth—concerning which our Lord also said: “I came to cast fire upon the earth, and would that it were already kindled!” (Luke 12:49)—licked up and scattered earthly cares, the water of intemperance, the restless and tumultuously agitated sea of this world, and souls, like brushwood, matter, and what, in the sight of piety, is hard and as if of stone, so that all together, in a crowd, might submit to the preaching of the apostles, fall on their faces, and say according to Paul’s word: “God is really among you, and truly the Lord God Himself is God” (1 Corinthians 14:25). And let no one believe that because God descended in fire upon Mount Sinai and the Holy Spirit appeared in tongues of fire, the divine essence is fire. For if God is invisible according to (the word): “No one has ever seen God” (John 1:18), and this fire was visible to our eyes, it is certain that He did not appear in His essence, nor did He show what He is, but it is under the appearance of fire that He made known a part of His own operations—namely, brightness, the destruction of sin, that is, purification. And this is why Moses also said to the children of Israel: “And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire” (Deuteronomy 5:4). Consequently, the Lord who spoke from the midst of the fire was other (than the fire), and the Lord was not the fire itself; otherwise He would have said: "The fire spoke to you." And likewise when He spoke to Elijah in

the cave of Mount Horeb and was going to signify to him what manifests Him in proper forms—in a gentle breeze, in a great wind, in the tempest (1 Kings 19:11-12), and in the fire—He had foretold concerning all this that one must not believe that the Lord is these things.

"You shall go out", He says, "tomorrow and stand before the Lord on the mountain, and behold, the Lord will pass by. And (there was) before the Lord a great and strong wind tearing the mountains and breaking the rocks in pieces: the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind (there was) an earthquake, the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake (there was) a fire, the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire (there was) the sound of a low whisper" (1 Kings 19:11-12). And after this He says: "And behold, a voice (spoke) to him". Thus, He only heard a voice, uttered softly like a gentle whisper; and He did not see the Lord, that is, the divine essence in the forms that appeared, among which was also the fire. For He appeared to the saints in various ways and not in a single manner common to all, since to Jacob He appeared as a man descending to wrestle (Genesis 32:24), and to Daniel likewise in the form of an old man and a man descending from heaven (Daniel 7:9-13). He said again through the prophet Hosea: "I multiplied visions, and by the prophets I gave parables" (Hosea 12:10). Thus, the Holy Spirit truly appeared upon the waters of the Jordan as a dove (Matthew 3:16), calling us back to the first dove announcing the cessation of the flood in the days of Noah (Genesis 8:8), to make known thereby clearly that the God of the Old and New Testaments is one, who reconciles the human race—there by causing to cease and removing the waters of destruction, now by purifying through the living water of holy baptism. And He appeared to the apostles in tongues of fire; and it was in the language of each people that He granted them to speak, causing to cease and effacing the ancient punishment of the division of tongues and diverse languages for those whom the one profession and faith in Christ have bound together and united. But the Holy Spirit is not by essence fire because He appeared thus, just as He is not a dove either. For what appears in a figure is one thing, and the very reality of His essence is another. This is why it is written concerning Emmanuel, not that He only appeared on earth, but that "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14), and that "God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4). For it is in essence and in truth that He became man, when He united to Himself, in hypostasis and apart from sin, the body (which is) of the Holy

Spirit and Mary, which has a soul and intelligence and is consubstantial with us, though He is God and consubstantial with the Father.

When I was about to say these words on the venerable day of Pentecost, I voluntarily refrained, because, with (the catechumens), more numerous than usual, having received holy baptism, we remained quietly administering the holy oil and fell behind; and there was much to fear that some of those who love feasts and who make a well-furnished table, served without delay and abundantly, the end of a feast, might reproach us because, on account of the sermon, they would wait and be delayed and would consider that the feast was then no feast. Now we have learned to have regard not for our own interests but for those of others (Philippians 2:4), and, in addition to our own house, to go about and let ourselves be drawn (elsewhere); for this follows from the legislation of the apostle, and this is a precept and a proverbial order. Yet we must not be so lax (Colossians 3:13) and look only to the pleasure of the belly and despise the soul; on the contrary, we must be greedy and desirous of reasonable and spiritual food, which is the hearing of divine words—this is truly and preeminently the food and drink of man—and put bodily things in second place. For it is possible for us to do both things, but each at the proper time, the principal things having been first honored as primary, and not despised for the sake of secondary things, or even completely abandoned through negligence. And indeed, I who say this am not without table and house either; and even at feasts, I prepare a more abundant table than usual, sometimes having others to dine. But it is not for this that I despise what is more important and have regard for dishes and food that passes and perishes, while I withdraw from teaching. For the day can measure and give to the belly also time of many sufficient hours. Why then do we hurry and show ourselves difficult, resist and press, when we are under the spur of gluttony and are carried away as in a race?

But you, perhaps, when you hear these (words), are indignant, saying: "As for us, we make absolutely no account of our belly, no more than of the abundance of dishes, and we say with Paul: “God will destroy both it and them” (1 Corinthians 6:13), cursing not this member of the body—for it was made by Him who made all things good and (which are) very good (Genesis 1:31)—but those who have their belly as their god (Philippians 3:19) and who think that filling it well constitutes well-being and the happiness of days. But we listen to spiritual words without

being sated by them, and we regard them as supreme delights and a joyful feast. Fear not, therefore, in any way to speak to us, even at your pleasure and frequently; never be negligent, and leave us not without food and prey to the hunger and desires of the soul." As for me, while you say these words, I leap for joy and rejoice; and yet I cannot have complete confidence. For I would like, even now saying this during the fast, not to be burdensome, if I escape accusation. For I hear many who weigh the ninth hour of this day in the balance and seek in the scale likewise what might tip it; and some say: "We were summoned late," and others: "It is our hour, it is just and proper"; others argue and assert more sharply, because of their hunger, that the end and dismissal of the assembly should have been at the ninth hour. As for me, I say very justly to those who are such: “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Indeed, you, awaken your understanding, if you please, concerning what has just been read. For you have heard, unless you have willingly forgotten, that “Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth (hour)” (Acts 3:1). We must therefore go up at the ninth hour, together with Peter and John, and not come down from the temple together with those who are unreasonably hungry. And the Lord will give you the reward, both for the fast and for having listened attentively, and He will teach each of you to say with Paul: “In any and all circumstances I am trained, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:12-13). However, to imitate Peter and John completely, when you go up to the temple, share mercy and charity with the needy, just as those had pity on the poor lame man, and this, though they had neither silver nor gold, but by giving him health, which is not for sale. And I urge you to do this for those around us, if they too imitate that lame man and stand or sit near the door of the temple, but not if they enter inside and interrupt your prayers and commit other misdeeds that I am even ashamed to mention. For it is possible that all be done, according to the laws of the apostle, with decency and order (1 Corinthians 14:40), to the glory of Christ, the God who is over all (Romans 9:5). To Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

**HOMILY 49 ON WHAT IS SAID BY THE APOSTLE IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: "THEREFORE, JUST AS SIN CAME INTO THE WORLD THROUGH ONE MAN, AND DEATH THROUGH SIN, SO DEATH SPREAD TO ALL MEN BECAUSE ALL SINNED—FOR SIN INDEED WAS IN THE WORLD BEFORE THE LAW WAS GIVEN, BUT SIN IS NOT COUNTED WHERE THERE IS NO LAW. YET DEATH REIGNED FROM ADAM TO MOSES, EVEN OVER THOSE WHOSE SINNING WAS NOT LIKE THE TRANSGRESSION OF ADAM, WHO WAS A TYPE OF THE ONE WHO WAS TO COME" (ROMANS 5:12, 14). AND ON WHAT IS SAID IN THE EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS: "WHEN ALL THINGS ARE SUBJECTED TO HIM, THEN THE SON HIMSELF WILL ALSO BE SUBJECTED TO HIM WHO PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIM, THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL" (1 CORINTHIANS 15:28).”** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Recalling from the beginning the righteous of old, according to an ancient custom passed down to us and a tradition descending from the holy Fathers and those who have been lawfully placed at the head of the Church, we thought it necessary to address to you a homily on this subject and to praise Christ, who died and lived for this: to be the Lord of the dead and the living (Romans 14:9). For it is not only for the living but truly also for the dead that He voluntarily bore and took upon Himself the saving cross. Thus, we call "living" the righteous who live in righteousness, and "dead" those who have died through sin. But if someone also calls "living" those who still live the carnal and ephemeral life, and "dead" those who were then counted among the dead, had departed from the world, and had already passed away, he will not stray from the truth either. For it is for both the righteous and sinners, for those who have departed from life and those who still live, that (Christ) shed His blood, so that, just as all died in Adam, so all may live in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22). For Paul cries out: “Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

Indeed, after Adam was formed from the dust and animated by a rational soul (Genesis 2:7), created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27)—because (this image) had been granted freedom and was to rule over what is on earth, and was capable

of receiving righteousness and all perfection, and could partake of other (prerogatives) of this kind (all things which in essence are seen only in God and the nature above all)—he lived the blessed life in Paradise and was crowned with the grace of immortality. But when he later transgressed the commandment he had received to test (his) freedom, to preserve the goods given to him, and to acquire those that were to be added to him, and (once he received as condemnation the sentence of death because of the sin of disobedience and the transgression of the commandment and heard: “You are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19)), from then on, we too, as (descendants) of a mortal father, became, consequently, mortal children—and not only that, but also (children) paralyzed in righteousness and the practice of all perfection, our very nature, as if sick with love of pleasure, being prone to slip and fall easily into sin, so that God could say: “The intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Genesis 8:21). This, then, is what Paul truly said: “Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Romans 5:12), as if to say: "Adam’s sin was a seed of death, and death itself, having spread to all his children like stalks, produced abundant fruits and made many sins grow, because all men, so to speak, were entangled in the nets of sins."

What then, tell me! Did God leave our nature without help? For what we once said in passing and hastily, I now wish to examine carefully, to scrutinize and fully study the thought of the apostle in what has been said on this subject. No, (our nature) was by no means without help. Indeed, it had the natural law to assist it and teach it what must be done. For naturally, God has placed in us the knowledge and discernment of what is truly good and evil, as well as the remorse of conscience. This is why, when Cain honored God in (his) offering with second-rate and lesser-quality produce from his harvest, and was scorned and despised in comparison to Abel, and, unable to bear that (the latter) was preferred, became sick with jealousy and stained his right hand with his brother’s murder, he was justly condemned to punishment. As for Enoch, it was when he practiced righteousness that he was taken up (Genesis 5:24). Likewise, those who came before him and lived as he did pleased God and were God’s familiars; yet they had absolutely no written law to observe to guide them to good. Did they not have within themselves the natural law, which sufficed to direct them? And because wickedness was not abolished either by the flood, or by the division of tongues, or by the fiery

lightning sent against Sodom, or, conversely, by the patriarchs who arose from time to time and could, like living pillars of perfection, draw by their example those attached to sin, from then on, the natural law was submerged by passions and no longer restrained anyone to correct them through their conscience. The spirit of all men having adopted this fund of wickedness, due to the multiplication of their sins, they no longer thought they were sinning.

From then on, therefore, there was need for another law, which would be a written reminder. For the fact that sin had accumulated and risen like a mountain and had obscured the natural law constituted an excuse for sinners; for they could say: "While we were submerged in evil and needed a reminder (of order) to be presented to us, none was presented to us." This is what the apostle said: “For sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law” (Romans 5:13). "On the one hand," he says, "sin was in the world; on the other hand, where there was no law to reprove it, it was not to be imputed to those who sinned." But after the law given by Moses entered stealthily and made those who were unaware of sin conscious of it, it ensured that (sin) was imputed. For we see this also in the sick: after a first remedy is applied, such as a diet that is observed and followed, if the cause provoking the illness is strengthened due to the patient’s lack of discipline, and the power of this remedy is weakened, if another special and more effective kind of second medicine is not applied to him, and we neglect to blame the patient, it is the physician we will blame, saying plainly that it is the patient’s fault that this happened—even though it is the patient himself who provided the causes for the worsening of his illness. But if the physician applies the means of medicine without omission and at the (proper) time for each thing, the accusations justly turn against the patient. At that time, then, the written law was given, so that our habit of sinning, which made sin abound and multiply, would not escape reproach for us, and so that sin would be imputed to those who sin after the establishment of the law and the reminder it (provokes).

But lest anyone object further, saying: "Did the law itself, then, completely abolish sin?", the apostle anticipates the objection and says: "The law was given for help, for “God gave the law for help” (cf. Isaiah), as the prophet Isaiah says; but our nature, which was without strength, whose vigor was dried up, and which had been weakened by the transgression of Adam’s commandment, He did not strengthen,

He did not restore to the health it needed, He did not deliver it from corruption. For He said: “You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:13-14), and by this He taught that sin must be fled; and He added: “You shall love the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 6:5), and: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18); and by this He showed the way of perfection. But He did not put into the (law) the strength to correct, nor did He correct human nature, bent by sin. It is as if someone gives a staff to an old man bent toward the ground to support and carry him but provides him with absolutely no strength to walk—he will not strengthen with any energy his stumbling and faltering feet due to old age."

“Death”, he says, “reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come” (Romans 5:14). For death, which entered our nature from Adam, was not hindered by the law of Moses. Here, indeed, he uses the name of Moses to signify the legislation and rule of life he gave, as it is said in the Gospels concerning those who lived at that time according to the law: “They have Moses and the prophets” (Luke 16:29)—even though Moses had long since left this world and departed to God. Death, therefore, passed, and in its course it reached even the end of the rule of life in Moses and the life under the law, which Christ and the Gospel abolished and repealed. And it passed, reigning even over those who did not sin (Romans 5:14). And how did death reign over those who did not sin and did not do the works of death? He answers and says: "It was not because of the faults they committed—for they did not sin—but “because of the likeness of the transgression of Adam’s commandment” (Romans 5:14). In the likeness, he says, of the transgression of the first father Adam’s commandment, as his children, they were seized by the writ of sin descending from there."

And lest anyone say: "How is it just that, because of the father’s fall, those born of him are guilty, even though they do not sin?", forestalling the objection, he joins the second (part) to the first, saying: “Because of the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come” (Romans 5:14). "Hold your tongue, O accuser. For even if the likeness of the first Adam is thought to have harmed those who did not sin, because the penalties of corruption and the transgression of the commandment passed to all men, yet, in truth, it gave birth to the likeness of a great charity, since it became the type of the second and future

Adam, who is Christ. The (first Adam), having allowed himself to be convinced, obeyed Eve; and after tasting the fruit of the tree, he was condemned to bear children in pain and destined for death—for this is what proclaims (the word): "You shall bear children in pain" (Genesis 3:16), and (the word): "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). But the (second Adam) sprang from a virgin woman when He was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and her (Luke 1:35), and He blessed our coming into existence.

And, having grafted, so to speak, incorruptibility into the stock of our nature, He healed opposites with opposites. He became for us the firstfruits of all goods when He transformed sorrows back into joys: He set a woman against the (first) woman—a sanctified virgin against the one deceived by the serpent; the Mother of God against the womb that bore Cain; against her who bears children in pain, curse, and corruption, her who bore in joy, blessing, and incorruptibility—for she heard: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:42); and the shepherds received from an angel the announcement of "great joy that will be for all the people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). And against a tree, He set up a tree—against the tree of disobedience, the tree of obedience; for for us disobedient ones, He obeyed the Father "to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). And He set hands against the (first) hands—those nailed with nails against the one who heedlessly touched what was forbidden—so that we too might nail our hands, that is, (our) deeds, to the cross, putting them to death to the works of the world. And against one way of tasting, He set in the balance another way of tasting—against unrestrained gluttony, the abstinence that instructs and heals us, I mean the (taste) of vinegar and gall (Matthew 27:34).

And here is everything in summary: against (the word): "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19), and: "You shall return to the ground from which you were taken" (Genesis 3:19), He set up the resurrection, and the life that (comes) from death, and the resurrection that comes from mortality—the seed of our rebirth and resurrection. Thus, in truth, He also went to Sheol when He descended into the lower parts of the earth (Ephesians 4:9)—not with divinity alone (for how could it be, since it fills all and cannot be seen?), nor by changing into the appearance of a soul (for it was necessary to drive out even from the

depths of the earth the imagination as harmful)—but, being united in an ineffable way to the soul that the Good Shepherd laid down for His sheep (John 10:11). And thus He appeared to the souls imprisoned there, to deliver those over whom death reigned, “even though they had not sinned in the likeness of Adam’s transgression” (Romans 5:14). And though they were not subjected to torment, they were nevertheless confined, and it was forbidden for them to take the path to Paradise and rest in the regions of light—they remain there until, after the resurrection, they ascend with their spirits together with Christ, until the total resurrection and the final blessedness of the kingdom of heaven come. Moreover, (He wanted) to say also to those in bonds: “Come out”, and to those in darkness: “Be enlightened” (Isaiah 49:9). For this too, the words of righteousness and the equity of judgments free from hypocrisy called Him Just and Charitable. The Apostle Peter also says: “When He went to proclaim to the spirits in prison, who had formerly not obeyed” (1 Peter 3:19-20), resolving the objection some raise: "If the Incarnation is beneficial, why did He not become incarnate much earlier?" For behold, “He went to proclaim to the spirits in prison” (1 Peter 3:19), to deliver all who were to believe in Him. Ah! If only He had come incarnate in the time when they were on earth! For they too, when He appeared and was seen in the depths of the earth, necessarily recognized Him and rejoiced at His appearing. And let no one say: "Is it not written somewhere in the divine book to the God of the universe: “In death there is no remembrance of You; in Sheol who will give You thanks?” (Psalm 6:5)." For it is written: “The dead will not see life” (Isaiah 26:14); but the same prophet says: “The dead will rise, and those in the tombs will be raised” (Isaiah 26:19). The first phrase is general and universal, applying to all nature, and the second is particular and supernatural, belonging only to the gift and power of God alone. For among the things that are part of the Economy and the Incarnation (wrought) for us, many are astonishing and go beyond the bounds of nature.

But it is time for us also to provide a suitable solution to the other (question) that seems difficult, is raised by many, and is the subject of inquiries—what is written by the Apostle to the Corinthians concerning Christ: “When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him who put all things in subjection under Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28).
We must know that God, by virtue of being Creator, (His) ineffable power and might, is, willingly or unwillingly, the God of us all, the Lord and King. But

according to the most excellent view, He is the King and God not of all men but only of those who will and who live according to perfection, and of those "over whom sin has not reigned in their mortal body" (Romans 6:12), as Paul says. For it is in this respect that He is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that the psalmist prophet praises: "My King and my God" (Psalm 5:2)—just as, in truth, he who is dominated by sin and shameful passions is not subject to God and, being subject to contrary things, is thought to raise his hands against the legitimate kingship. When, therefore, Christ humbled Himself for our salvation, He appropriated all that is ours. And as we ourselves were under the curse, He drew the curse upon Himself to erase it, and for this He was called and even became a curse. For Paul says: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written: Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree—so that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:13-14). In this respect, we also say that He was called sin; for "He who knew no sin, He made to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Therefore, just as He was called a curse and sin for us, so too, when we ourselves do not live according to the commandments but are agitated by passions, it is by appropriating (our) rebellion and insubmission that He is Himself called insubmissive—so that when, by instructing and teaching us through the Gospel and bringing us to knowledge, He removes rebellious sin from us and subjects us to grace, and we, being dominated by righteousness, are brought to God, He is then considered to be henceforth subjected, appropriating our submission in place of insubmission and disobedience. And He Himself is also understood and said to be subjected, "so that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28). For then, it is not only because He is Creator but also through knowledge in all things alike that He will be the God of those who have been subjected—some who have already known Him because of perfection and have been subjected to Him, and others who will finally know Him in the unending torment that now burns without illuminating.

Let no one, hearing concerning the Son the (word): "To Him who subjects all things to Him" (1 Corinthians 15:28), think that He lacks power or is in need, so that He requires the Father to subdue and subject all things to Him. For the Holy Trinity is equal in all things; and it truly pertains to one essence, one operation, and one power, even if the external form of the phrase is constructed otherwise. For if

the Father is said to do something, necessarily He does it through the Son and in the Spirit. And, properly (speaking), Paul wrote to the Philippians concerning the Son, according to the operation “that He is able even to subject all things to Himself” (Philippians 3:21). Let us tremble, then, beloved, we who hear that Christ is called insubmissive because of our disobedience, opposition, and the war of (our) passions. Let us submit to the Spirit, reject the life given to passions, and prepare ourselves, so that in us too “God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28)! To Him be glory forever. Amen!

## HOMILY 50 ON SAINT LEONTIUS THE MARTYR. TABLE OF CONTENTS

I would like to remain silent, know this well, since I have already once praised the courageous Leontius. But I see that his blood speaks within me like the blood of Abel, whose voice God heard, and I cannot hold my tongue. And this is entirely just, for the blood shed for piety is more eloquent than any language. How, indeed, could the blood of a speaking being, shed in sacrifice for God and the Word, consciously and willingly, not proclaim something great, powerful, and worthy of being heard? What, then, are these (words) that we hear him proclaim? — That we must forsake the flesh, as something transient and corruptible, — though we will return to it for the purification of the soul — and await that spiritual and immaterial life, that of the resurrection. For if we hope in Christ only for this life, we are the most miserable of all men. On the one hand, Christ, who died and rose again, was sufficient to strengthen in this hope those who believed in Him and were buried with Him in baptism and rose with Him. On the other hand, we also find the teaching of Scripture, which we must absolutely not reject without believing, since it is inspired by God, for what is provided by God is beyond all debate and hesitation. But how does the fact that the struggles of the martyrs still seal the sacred words not clearly show the solidity and firmness of this expectation? For we have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken, as Paul says. Let no one, therefore, be so foolish and devoid of all good sense as to confine this immortal and so spiritual hope, whose immutability far surpasses the sufferings endured for it by the athletes, in this miserable and pitiable life. They did not accept suffering, or, when they did, it was not enough, given the great number of torments they had to bear, if Christ, the God of hope, had not fought within them.

Such are the words, and others like them, that the courageous and valiant blood of the martyr Leontius expresses to us. When we have stained the wings of our thought with his blood, we will fly to heaven, lightened in a way and made courageous by the practice of virtues, trained in wisdom, justice, courage, and chastity. When, through all the labors of a praiseworthy ascetic life, we parade before our eyes the struggles of the martyrs and whisper these things to ourselves, the flame of the desire for fornication will be extinguished, because, seeing the flesh of these pious men melt in the fire, we will feel shame. The soul will receive

lessons in health and energy and will not be deceived by the sophisms of the Slanderer, due to the constancy of these courageous men before tyrants, whom neither flattery nor threats could sway. The insatiability of greed and injustice will be curbed, since the martyrs not only abandoned their possessions but even their own flesh, at the command that said: “If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” For if we must not be unjust to our fellow men, we must also take care, according to Paul’s word, not to be overcome by Satan: for whenever we harm our fellow men, we are wounded by an evil demon; likewise, the wounds inflicted on us by others prevent us from seeing those we truly inflict on ourselves.

On this point, Leontius, the champion of piety, was not overcome, nor did he take up arms against his fellow men: in such a case, either one falls upon someone stronger and can neither plunder nor enslave them; or, having unjustly attacked and captured them, one angers God and is not saved, as the prophet Isaiah also truly says, expressing the same idea in the form of a question: “Can anyone take plunder from a strong man? Or if someone unjustly takes a prisoner, will he be saved?” But when (Leontius) served as a soldier with the heavenly King and stood beside the spiritual strong man against Satan, who had prevailed over us, he plundered him and stripped him of his strength, and he was saved and redeemed with an eternal redemption, having won the crowns of martyrdom, taken from him his many weapons, and presented them to make the truth known. Of these sacred struggles, Isaiah again sings the victorious song, saying: “Thus says the Lord: If anyone takes a strong man prisoner, he will take the plunder; and when he has received from the strong one, he will be redeemed.” Did the blood of animals and pagan sacrifices procure anything similar for those who honored and served them, as the martyrs instructed and taught the faithful, they who were rational victims, living holocausts even after the fire had burned them, pillars of virtue, examples of courage? Absolutely not, for the blood of irrational animals, shed for mute, lifeless, and unconscious idols, produced only senseless suffering, not purification. This is why their mysteries were celebrated with vile appearances, carnal dealings, dishonorable and licentious words and expressions, and songs inducing madness, softness, or estrangement from all thoughts of solidarity. Who would not be astonished at such a strange divine change? At Daphne, it is Leontius, the teacher of chastity, who speaks and reveals, not Apollo, the lover whose love for Daphne

was thwarted, and who, to console himself for the fury endured in pursuing his beloved — his actions having failed — is crowned with her branches. But it seems these leaves were not enough to quench the ardor of his desire; indeed, wounded in the head by his passion, he led many astray and deceived them beyond propriety, solving riddles and holding a useless lyre. The beloved maiden reproached him and showed that he was no musician, that is, he did not know how to sing, but she was neither deceived nor swayed by his tones.

Let the sons of poets be covered with shame, they who fill our ears with the lyre and the tripod and deceive and mislead miserable and senseless pagans with fables, and let them be silent about Apollo's divination! For (Apollo) is in complete and total silence, terrified and fleeing everywhere. He and the band of other demons fled from the martyrs who came from the nations, who once feared them and offered them sacrifices. But as soon as they notice that one of the saints approaches and is present somewhere, immediately, at that very moment, they flee like the flame of fire, unable to endure him, and they go away, crying, lamenting, and weeping, confessing their defeat, naming the martyrs themselves and begging them not to persecute them, just as they also said to their Master, trembling: "What have we to do with you, Jesus, Son of God? Have you come here before the time to destroy us?" The prophet Isaiah also sings this hymn of victory and cries out to the martyrs, saying: "Behold, they themselves will fear because of your fear; those you feared will fear you. For they will send ambassadors asking for peace, weeping bitterly, for their paths will become desolate." Desolate indeed and abandoned are the temples of Delphi, Olympia, Nemea, Epidaurus, and Isthmos, and the soothsayers and babbling gods weep together, because no one comes to them anymore.

You see, on the contrary, that it is to Leontius that every path sends a pious and truly innumerable crowd, spreading like a river from all sides. At Tripoli on the sea, he performs this miracle: contrary winds, blushing at this glorious and admirable day, blow together and come to each other's aid, and, as if to please those they amuse, blow also for those who sail, so that the ships truly seem to dance, whirl about, and chase one another, taking their places and delighting the sailors with great joy, so that at the end of the voyage, one arrives at the height of pleasure. For God, who spoke through the prophet Isaiah, cries out through the

martyr — for I will not stray from the words of the Spirit, honoring an athlete of the Spirit —: “I will say to the north: Bring, and to the south: Do not withhold. Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth, all who invoke my name.” Since, therefore, we have so powerful an intercessor, let us pray that he restrain these winds of perversity, which blow a certain bestiality hostile to men and trouble our city, so that Christ, our peace, may make a peaceful and gentle wind blow for us in their place, since He is favorable and propitious to our sins, and grant us all good conduct and good life in this dwelling, and make us worthy of that future life. May it come to pass that we all obtain it through charity and the grace of Him to whom belong praise and power, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen!

## HOMILY 51 ON THE MARTYR SAINT DOMÈCE. TABLE OF CONTENTS

I think to myself that the victorious martyr of Christ, Domèce, would justly accuse us of ingratitude if we were to pass him over in silence, without moving our tongues at all to praise him. Indeed, on the one hand, the mere fact that he suffered for piety, bravely fought in the holy contests, and wove the crown that follows from it would itself suffice to give words ample reason, to make abundant springs of praise flow forth, and to show us unjust in keeping silent. On the other hand, since every day he drives away various illnesses from those who suffer and heals the sick without payment and openly in the city, how could he shield from reproach those who remain silent—or rather, who do not open their mouths in any way to praise him?

Indeed, the woman afflicted with a flow of blood, after dissipating all her fortune to give to physicians, drew her healing almost effortlessly and without expense when she touched the hem of His garment with her hand and, in her thoughts, descended to the depths of faith to grasp God, the Word and physician. Therefore, while a great crowd pressed and thronged around Him, as if she alone had touched Him in a spiritual and stranger way than the others, He asked, “Who touched Me?”—not because He did not know who had touched Him, but because He wanted, through His question, to unveil and reveal to all this contact, which was known to Him alone. Thus, while the disciples were also perplexed—for, strictly speaking, more were harshly rebuking Him than touching Him—He cried out, “Someone touched Me, for I know that power has gone out from Me”, declaring the "power that went out" as the fulfillment of this healing, which she had drawn by faith and which she had drawn as from a wellspring of healings.

And it is to Domèce that all the sick rush—not after being squeezed dry beforehand by physicians, nor after being ruined by enormous expenses and reduced to poverty, but after dismissing from afar those who sell healing itself and taking refuge in his goodness, which is not for sale and which heals as soon as an illness approaches. Then, clearly and by the very facts, he professes these words of the prophet: “All you who have no money, come, buy!” And how will one buy without money? It is when one is certain that, instead of money, faith must be

offered. For the martyr is eager for gain concerning such a price, and he demands faith. For he takes care to heal not only the sick body but, even before the body, the soul—because, in truth, faith first purifies the believing soul and restores its health, and through this, it procures salvation for the body, so that this healing seems to be not the work of the miracle-worker but of the one who has faith. This is why Our Lord also responded to each of those who believed in this way, saying, “Your faith has saved you”. With this faith, all likewise come to this sacred temple—not only those afflicted with grave illnesses but also those with minor ones—and not by secretly touching the urn of the holy relics or anointing themselves with the oil that flows from it, but, to speak frankly and simply, “beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, as in a mirror”, and standing before all as in a hospital. Indeed, if the oratories of other martyrs are adorned with white marble slabs, ceilings, basins, and cubes of various colors that shine and glitter on the floor, this venerable and adorable house of Domèce is adorned, for its part, with the living images of these sick people, publicly placed before the eyes of all. And as in a spiritual furnace, they are set ablaze, purified, corrected, and sent forth more radiant by health, while these sick, when lying down, recalled to Jesus Himself, the God of the Martyr, that crowd of whom it is written in the Gospels: “When He saw the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”.

Therefore, each departs after obtaining a swift healing. One can see people of every sex and age lying mixed together on the ground. And while the groan of an ailing old man sometimes ceases when he is healed, the cry of an adolescent or the pitiful lament of a small child is heard in response. And a woman, often their mother, weeping over them, tearing her robe, striking her chest, clawing her cheeks, bending over the sick, wishes to take the illness upon herself—but cannot—and finally mingles her tears with a prayer, asking the martyr himself to aid her supplication. And suddenly, at that very moment, the ambassador himself comes spontaneously, whether she calls or others remain silent, and gathers for all joy and deliverance from evils. And those who are healed, yielding their place to those entering, depart, giving to them their own healing as a true pledge that they too will obtain what they await.

Thus, the true servant of God, Domèce, provides easy and abundant healings for all illnesses and drives away swarms of evil demons like flies. But what he especially restores to place and perfect health are fractures from the thigh to the heel, or dislocations, or illnesses arising from tremors or broken bones, or paralyzed nerves, or narrowed arteries—more swiftly than by a word.

Now, it seems to me that God granted this—this special grace—as a reward for his labor, to the martyr's chastity and his renunciation of evil desires. For I hear of him that, while he was in the flesh, when he devoted himself to the ascetic and hermitic way of life, he trained and maintained himself through practical exercises, dwelling in a cave and pursuing an uncompromising life. Now, among those who practice this way of life, the generative organs near the thighs, when deadened by chastity and continence, become, as it were, withered—fruitless and without generation—because they have been consecrated to God and, so to speak, cry out in the manner of Paul: "It is good for a man to be so". Conversely, among those whose hands are paralyzed—that is, those who do not practice the works of virtue—the thighs are defiled by moist pleasures. For thus the prophet Ezekiel speaks somewhere when revealing the causes of the ruin that was to come upon Jerusalem: "And I will put them all to death: all hands will be paralyzed, and all thighs will be defiled with moisture". And perhaps—or rather, to speak more truly—it is not only for a chaste and true exercise of virtue that the martyr Domèce received as a prerogative and gift this faculty of healing illnesses related to the thighs, but also for the divine knowledge of Jesus. For he believed that it is from the thighs of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribe of Judah that Christ was born according to the flesh, having taken something of our nature, and that He is the same God above all. This is what Abraham, too, having been initiated beforehand by the Spirit that reveals what is unknown and must come to pass, said when he asked his own servant, who belonged to his household, to swear an oath to him: "Put your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and earth", believing that the Word who was to be incarnated from his race is the Lord, the God of heaven and earth. Jacob also said this in advance, breathing his last and formulating for his own sons the blessings concerning his departure from the world, which were mysteriously laden with the prophecy of the One who was to come: "A prince shall not depart from Judah, nor a leader from his thighs, until He comes to whom it belongs, and He is the expectation of the nations".

And Christ is the one who, according to the flesh, comes genealogically and descends from the Fathers and the circumcision, and who has taken upon Himself to accomplish such an Economy in love. And He Himself is the expectation and hope of the nations. This is why Paul, writing to the Romans, said: “And I affirm that Christ Jesus became a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and the Gentiles shall glorify God for His mercy”. And again: “To whom belong the patriarchs, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.” This is what the martyr Domèce teaches us, making God known through healings. He is from the regions near the city of Cyr, who has come to dwell among us in a salutary manner, and who unveils and scorns—for these were the martyr’s words, not ours—the impious Theodoret, who unlawfully presided over this city, who was sick with the same folly as Nestorius, who taught that this one Christ was two natures after the union, and who degraded the truly great and divine mystery—which even appeared divine to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who believed in it—to the worship of a man, though it was foretold only through symbols and signs.

Therefore, when we rejoice in such healing and such doctrine of the martyr, whether healed in the thigh or another part of the body, let us not honor him only with silver or gold plaques bearing the image of the healing and the very member that was healed. Rather, let us adorn our members with purity and hold them brighter than gold and brighter than silver—either by restraining their particular impulse through honorable marriage and a pure bed, which is their law, or by putting them to death and sanctifying them through virginity, for the glory of Him who emptied Himself and who came to us, through genealogies, from the thighs of Abraham. For a golden ring or necklace is not as beautiful an ornament as chaste conduct, when observed, and virginity, which through abstinence and continence repels the attack and impulse of the flesh, and pity for the poor, which, added to these practices, waters and sustains the very lamp of the virtues, so that it does not go out and renders God Himself favorable. For the charitable one very promptly aids those who come to the aid of the needy and do not turn away from those of the same race. This is what pleases the martyrs; this is what pleases Christ, the God of the martyrs. Let us pursue this eagerly and with all diligence, and let us make more powerful the prayers of the saints that they offer for us. For these prayers

themselves drive away from this city every illness and every deadly affliction, just as, in truth, what we were doing was the cause of much wrath. For every day, we all increase in wickedness, despising the riches of God's kindness and patience. Let us hasten, therefore, to transform ourselves and show fruits of repentance before the immeasurable grace of patience comes to an end. But it is abundantly available to us, the prayers of the martyrs being powerful. May it come to pass that grace is not measured out to us but remains for us without end, and that the power of intercessions is not weakened or made vain by our sins, through the grace and love of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be praise with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages of ages! Amen!

## HOMILY 52 ON THE MACCABEES. TABLE OF CONTENTS

The eulogy of the young Maccabees will, it seems, provide abundant material for discourse to those who speak of them, due to the splendor of their struggles. Yet, because their deeds surpass all imagination of the mind, they reveal the weakness and inadequacy of those who praise them, showing how even with great eloquence, they fall short of the truth. Just as a painter who sees an extraordinary object, possessing by nature an infinite beauty, and attempts to depict it with colors may create a beautiful and fitting image—one that resembles the splendid and captivating model—yet it remains inferior to its subject because art cannot perfectly reproduce natural beauty, so too when we, through the artifice of words, seek to portray the spiritual beauty (εὐπρέπεια) and the youthful zeal for piety (εὐσέβεια) of the seven young men, we may indeed say beautiful and very beautiful things. But it is the nature of the subject that these words fall far short of the greatness of their deeds and remain beneath their true essence.

We learn that the seven young men, having just left childhood and entered the threshold of youth, were like the rungs of a ladder, differing little in age from one another. Yet all these young men endured the same death for piety, suffering various kinds of tortures. Before them, Eleazar, an elderly priest, taught the sufferings for virtue rather than the Law. After them, their mother, advanced in age, also heroically endured the tortures of her children, resisting her maternal affections. Who, upon hearing this, would not be struck with admiration? What soul would not be astonished? What accumulation of fitting expressions could elevate their deeds to their true height? Indeed, praises born of imagination and the art that promises solemn style remain earthbound. But their deeds soar to heaven, lifted by their own wings, not by artificial or borrowed ones. To God, who ordained the contest for piety, they cry out with the prophet: “With You is our praise in the great Church!”

By mentioning the Church, I have drawn from the athletic struggle of these brave confessors a more divine and mystical meaning. It seems to me that they are models: the elder Eleazar represents the Law, which had grown old in Scripture; the young men, instructed by the elder and their mother, symbolize the Church, which has gathered the nations—once childless but later blessed with abundant

offspring. She too was first instructed and learned from the Law the elementary teachings, which are, so to speak, the first alphabet of piety. Of her, the prophetess Anna said: “The barren has borne seven,” when the Church, which once had many sons, was weakened. But how has this arena of virtue been presented to your eyes, unshadowed even by time, which seeks to destroy ancient principles? It is because, sung by all, it resounds in the ears of those who have not yet tasted its novelty. The exquisite feast of the Old Testament is offered in the cycle of years, and the New Testament gives it with love, yet without satiety.

At the forefront sat Antiochus the tyrant, the epitome of cruelty. For it is the nature of vanity and poverty of spirit to make those who suffer under it believe it is harsh for them to remain on earth with other men. They strive to rise into the air, to ascend and walk on tiptoe, to lift their heads and elevate themselves as much as possible, like the cedars of Lebanon, of which the divine Book speaks, condemning their barrenness and pride. Around him stood many troops of soldiers and spearmen, armed and fearsome to behold. Before them were placed various instruments of torture, representing different kinds of punishments. Some were extraordinary, serving only as tests, but all threatened a bitter and violent death. With the most subtle lacerations, if one may say so, they tore both flesh and soul, gradually separating the latter from the bond of their intimate union. At the forefront advanced the priest Eleazar, whose old age was revealed by his white hair, yet whose spirit was youthful. He was commanded to eat the flesh of pagan sacrifices and swine and to renounce the pure worship of the Law. The tyrant believed that if he could overcome Eleazar, he would also conquer the Law and the priesthood, whose ruin would follow the old man’s defeat. It was these institutions he attacked, not merely the individuals. He also thought the young men and disciples would follow their teacher without resistance. But he was disappointed in his hope and delusion. Eleazar rejuvenated his aged and weakened body against harsh calamities. He strengthened the young men, whose bodies were ardent and vigorous. He proved that the Law was spiritual and the priesthood sublime and exalted, showing that they possess a mystical hope for which one must suffer and that they do not exist merely in appearance or in writing.

Antiochus was greatly occupied (πολύς τῷ) mocking Eleazar as one who suffered uselessly and scorned the most delicious dish of swine’s flesh. He called this dish a

blessing of nature and considered it folly to prefer death to such a meal. But he tempered his threats, laughing at the man while also seeking to frighten him. At times, he showed pity and compassion, saying: “This man is bent and weakened by age and infirmity.” The same sentiments were shared by the servants, the spearmen who surrounded Eleazar in arms, thus protecting the king. They encircled the old man in good order like a tower of virtue. But he was inaccessible to them, utterly unassailable and invincible. He said: “Our Law, O Antiochus, is the true Law; it is the work and gift of God, not the doctrine of man. Have you not heard of Moses, his forty-day fast, the splendor and purification he gained from it, the summit of Mount Sinai, the cloud, and the One who revealed Himself to him? Have you not heard of the tablets inscribed by the finger of God, written on both sides? To the very dull, these tablets showed the outward face of the writing, but to those who contemplated them with insight, they revealed the mystical depths of the Spirit. From there comes our aversion to swine’s flesh, which teaches us to restrain the passion of gluttony, not to seek delicacies, and thus to observe continence. I revere, therefore, either the Founder of the Law, who is God, or the Spirit of the Law. To irrational animals, it is permitted, as you say, to enjoy the abundance of nature’s gift and unrestrained pleasures. But to man, endowed with reason, it is not permitted to do or eat all that is possible; he has received a Law that forbids some things and permits others. That is why we call barbarians beasts, for they put everything under their teeth, obeying nature and not the Law. Such is the Spirit of the Law, to say nothing of its sublime and ineffable meanings. But I must also address impiety and disobedience to the mysteries. What shall I say of the exterior or the dignity of the High Priest? I fear the tunic that reaches to the feet, woven with varied and diverse colors, showing that the High Priest must be clothed with the whole array of virtues. I am ashamed before the breastplate of judgment, the symbol of truth, which those who received the priesthood wore on their chests, entering the Holy of Holies to acquire the intellectual reason guided by speech rather than anger and hostile passions, to judge rightly, to receive as in a mirror the revelations from above, and to transmit them accurately and truthfully to the initiated. I am confounded before the “kidaris”, that is, the tiara that crowns the priest’s head, signifying that he has fortified himself against the passions. I tremble before the golden band on the forehead, sanctified by the name of God, inscribed alone with unutterable letters, illuminating the priest’s face, guiding him, and teaching him that he alone shall see God. When I am immersed in these and many

other thoughts, why would I betray the Law of my fathers? Why would I be conquered by a dish devoid of reason? Why would I defile my mouth, which has remained pure even to such an age? You see, Antiochus, the state of my soul; now take a test of my body." Struck as by goads by these words full of philosophy, Antiochus ordered the elder to be lacerated with tortures. Immediately, the cruel spearmen began to strike with their fists, inflicting many wounds. With whips, they tore his sides and shredded his flesh until his blood flowed abundantly. The elder, fixing his eyes on heaven and hastening toward the celestial path, breathed heavily and sweated profusely. Finally, without being forced to utter a word of weakness or cowardice, he was delivered to the fire's fury. Then, when the rest of his body was consumed, after his prayer for the people and his last words as a dying man addressed to God, he soared to the blessed dwellings of the angels and the holy fathers.

The young men, following the priestly instructions, welcomed their teacher's struggles and meditated on them with great diligence and eagerness. They understood the elder's endurance in suffering better than the teachings of the Law, and they preached it fervently. They preserved this knowledge in their memory with remarkable vividness, without error or forgetfulness. The wisdom they received was taught and transmitted not primarily by the tongue but by courage equal to the tortures. Each of the young men was brought forward publicly according to his stature. The tyrant believed that by punishing the eldest, he would frighten the others into submission. For who would not falter in fear, seeing his brothers' flesh cruelly torn and mutilated? But this was not the result. Instead, the idea of striking terror incited these valiant warriors, armed with piety (εὐσέβεια), to show even greater courage. The eldest brother thought it his duty to imitate his teacher. The second believed that, beyond his teacher's virtuous example, his brother's example also obligated him. The third strove to surpass those who had gone before him in the contest and to set an example of heroism for those who remained. All were united in their struggles and combats. Each fought not only for his own martyrdom but also for another's. The first to advance was an animated pillar for the one who followed, a new symbol of courage suddenly written and placed before him, sufficient to inspire equal zeal. The last, entering the arena, felt their brothers' athleticism more than those who suffered. They prepared for the imminent trial, fearing not to follow their predecessors' footsteps but to fail to

show in their bodies their fraternal bond and the same endurance under the varied tortures inflicted by the instruments of punishment. One was stretched on a wheel that dislocated his joints as it turned, while burning coals beneath scorched him. Another was flayed with iron hooks like a sheep. Another, ordered to have his tongue cut out, extended it himself for the executioner, showing that if any inner part were demanded for torture, he would willingly offer it. Each was eager to display in the face of new torments a readiness to be tested in every limb at once and to endure many trials before his soul parted from his body. They judged that it is often the nature of animals to be slain in a single slaughter, but for those distinguished by vigor, it is fitting to bear many marks of courage on their bodies, to march together toward the adversaries' swords, and to shed their blood as much for their enemy as for their kin. Such was the power of these young men, these valiant heroes, that I will not linger on recounting each one's deeds. Such was the zeal, so well prepared for combat, of these invincible confessors. Just as craftsmen setting precious and extraordinary stones in a golden crown do not choose stones of a single color but of diverse and varied hues to produce a single radiance, so these young men joyfully rushed into these strange and varied tortures, adorning the crown of martyrdom with struggles as varied as precious stones.

When six of these brothers had finished their course and, by their race, attained the crown of the heavenly call, the seventh remained last. Stirred by the six preceding martyrdoms, he burned with zeal to fight and contend for piety. The tyrant, fearing him, sought to weaken him with flattery and promises. Seeing the youth despise his offers, he ordered the mother to be brought near, expecting her age and the loss of her sons to move him to pity. He also thought she might, by her presence—and even more by her words—soften, sway, and recall the athlete to nature. The fool did not realize that she had also anointed the other brothers for martyrdom and sent them to heaven. Indeed, standing by them like a steadfast and valiant general of piety's warriors, she exhorted them, moving from one to another, watching and fearing lest any of her sons falter or waver. She made each a hero and at the same time established with them a pact for torture, hoping she would perish by fire or be cut down like a tree when the branches from her stock were severed. In short, she uttered these words of St. Paul: "My children, for whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you!" She thought, exhorted, and acted thus in secret, not visibly. When she publicly approached her youngest son by the tyrant's command,

she spoke a brief word in Hebrew, casting it not only into his ears but into his mind. She spoke in her ancestral tongue not to hide from the servants but to remind the athlete of the early fathers and their ancient victories and to spur him to equal zeal. She inflamed and greatly stirred the youth's heart, who, in his rapture, hastened to drink this bitter death like sweet wine. "Release me from my bonds!" he cried to those standing by. Quickly freed by them—who mistakenly thought he had abandoned his warlike resolve—he leaped and plunged into one of the cauldrons placed before him on a blazing fire. Sooner than he thought, he fulfilled his desire and joined the heavenly company of his brothers. After him, his mother showed courage. She who had been tested by such sorrows, crowned by the seven martyrdoms of her sons, also wore the crown of her sons, proving by the deeds themselves from what root these valiant shoots had sprung. The lampstand with seven lights did not illuminate the Tabernacle as brightly as she, with the seven rational lampstands of her sons, made the Church of Christ shine.

Hear this, O mothers, and raise your sons in the same way. Let them go to church and encourage them to receive the priests' teachings. Do not stifle them with worldly cares. "What is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal," cries Christ through St. Paul's mouth. O holy mother! O manly soul in a woman's body! O harmony of brothers, who showed us the same upbringing, the same virtue, the same endurance for the same hope, the same honorable death! What, then, will those who cast horoscopes by the planets' movements say to this? Surely not that they were born at the same hour or under the same zodiac sign—that is, under a single point. Nor, as the foolish Manichaeans say, because they all shared a great portion of a single power. Rather, the ruling thought was a pious thought (εὐσέβεια), one in them all; it was the same crown of martyrdom that called them. These martyrs, drawing their zeal from the Law's teaching, preceded the confessors of the Gospel in their race, just as St. John the Baptist preceded Christ. Earlier, the three young men and Daniel, the man of noble aspirations, were saved from the fiery furnace at Babylon and the lions' den, appearing to the barbarians as venerable because of miracles and destined to lead the Israelites back to the earthly Jerusalem. The young Maccabees, preceding Christ's coming, the resurrection, and the spiritual Jerusalem—whose craftsman and builder is God—the proclamation of the near Kingdom of Heaven, departed from the arena of contests to heaven, instituting and teaching us first the hope of the future life for which they prepared

us. If this had not preceded, guided by Providence, what would those blind Jews not have said when they saw men dying in tortures for confessing Christ? Those Jews who have no eyes to behold the victorious hope of the resurrection, by whose rays we have been enlightened through the goodness and love (φιλανθρωπία) of Him who calls us. To Him be eternal glory, amen!

## HOMILY 53 ON CORRECTION, THAT IS, THE CALAMITY WHICH, IT IS SAID, WAS SENT BY GOD TO ALEXANDRIA. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Let no one think that priests or those entrusted with the leadership of the people can remain silent without danger. Let no one imagine either that they do any favor to the listeners when they appear in public to speak and teach. It is a duty they fulfill by acting thus, a duty which, if neglected, causes extreme anguish to those who shirk it. The prophet Amos says: “Priests, listen and bear witness to the house of Jacob, says the Lord, the Almighty God!” Isaiah gives us the same command: “Comfort, comfort my people, says God; priests, speak to the heart of Jerusalem.” Therefore, first, the priest must possess, through purification, a very keen ear to promptly grasp the revelations sent by God, whether threats or commandments. Second, he must bear witness to the people and speak, not trembling, but with a certain wise and legitimate freedom; not simply, but “to the heart of Jerusalem,” so that the word may touch the listeners, not merely delighting the ear but penetrating inward, sending the benefit of its explanations to the soul. It is for such a word that Saint Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “But in the church, I would rather speak five words with my mind to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.”

The words spoken by God to the prophet Ezekiel inspire great fear in those who lead the people, even in those who show insensitivity. They terrify and clearly demonstrate the danger of silence, especially for the one entrusted with the office of High Priest. He is called a “watchman” (σκοπός), either because he acts and watches over the people he seeks with care, and every eye scrutinizes and examines him as he directs, at all times, the flock under his authority according to apostolic law; or because he is placed before us as a model and emblem of righteousness in life; one might also call him a “target” (σκοπός), that is, a mark toward which archers shoot their arrows. The goal (σκοπός) is so named because those who draw the bow fix their gaze on the sign or target when, aiming well, they wish to shoot an arrow. Similarly, the people must look to the priest as to a goal or sign and direct all their actions according to his conduct and words. Thus, Saint Paul, whose mind’s eye never turned away or wandered but looked only to heavenly things, says: “Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” He calls the priest especially a “watchman” (σκοπός), following the

idea that it is customary to name as a watchman (σκοπός) one who stands on a wall or another high place, fixes his eyes attentively, looks far ahead, and is the first to announce the invasion and approach of the enemy or some other unknown event soon to occur. This expression (σκοπός) can be found in the Book of Kings, where it is clearly described: “The watchman went up and lifted his eyes; he saw a great multitude advancing on the road from Suraim, from the side of the mountain. The watchman came to inform the king and said: 'I have seen men on the road from Suraim, from the side of the mountain.'“ Likewise, the leader of the people, standing on the tower of virtues as on a high place, elevated in deed and in theory, and for this reason seated above all others, must possess an intellectual eye, pure and piercing, enlightened from on high, so that he may be the first to see from afar the imminent calamities, the invasion of demons like enemies, the hidden snares, or the concealed nets of the Evil One, in order to warn first, prepare, guide, and direct the events that must arise, apart from the misfortunes that will strike the people. This is why Holy Scripture names him especially a “watchman” (σκοπός), as I have said. Then Scripture demands of the priest that, after being the first to see, he bear witness to the people freely, publicly, more clearly even than the trumpet with its joyful sound and loud voice, so that he may touch the hard and closed ear, shut by the wickedness of the world. It is good for him also to hear the word of Ezekiel and to know what his fear should be and what punishment is fixed and reserved for priests who do not preach thus. This word is as follows: “The word of the Lord came to me, saying: 'Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: If I bring a sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them and make him their watchman, and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people, then if anyone hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman’s hand.'“ In view of these threats—if a watchman who remains silent without warning or alerting would be guilty even for the loss of a single soul—what shall we do? Or rather, what cruel sorrow shall we not endure, we who have been placed at the head of the people? Not only do we fail to warn of what is to come, but we also have tongues insensitive to the pains placed before

our eyes, pains strange and extraordinary, which did not exist in times past and of which no mention has been handed down to us by history.

For we have known, in a time not long past and also in ancient times, cities, regions, communities, and nations that paid for the sins of the guilty and suffered cruelly from epidemics, continuous rains, the scourge of hail, the devastation of locusts, famine leading to a lack of necessary food. They experienced a pernicious disease and the loss of many men who died from it, or they were delivered into captivity to enemies, or they were struck with incurable ulcers and abscesses. But that it was permitted to barbarian demons to arm themselves thus en masse against an entire people of a city or a region is terrible news, of which we had not yet heard. When I reviewed the curses pronounced by Moses against those who transgress the commandments of the Law and read the different kinds of plagues, I found nothing like this. But perhaps someone will cite this word of Moses: “The Lord will strike you with madness, blindness, and confusion of mind.” Yet this is only a part and not the complete image of the plague that has now come. For in the calamity itself, there is madness and confusion of mind. But there is also something more, things that words cannot express and that the ear cannot believe. That men should rave, throw themselves to the ground, tear and rend their flesh without feeling it, and become enraged by the operation of these demons that oppress them—this deserves to be written down. But that they imagine they are shining and extinguish burning coals, “charcoal” (καρέωσα), is a fact beyond demonic rage and beyond the natural order, and we cannot put into words this pain that surpasses speech. To this we must add, among the curses of Moses, this prediction: “The Lord will make your plagues and the plagues of your offspring extraordinary, great and prolonged plagues, and severe and lasting illnesses.” For it is the nature of prodigies to occur beyond universal expectation and common thought, to escape the grasp of the mind, to astonish by their occurrence, and to be believed only after they have happened. No one would believe them before they occurred. This is why Moses calls such plagues extraordinary and certain. After these terrible threats, he introduces another that is even more dreadful: “And every sickness and every plague, which are not written in the Book of this Law, the Lord will bring upon you until you are destroyed.”

The calamity that was foretold in a general and common way—that there would be extraordinary kinds of plagues—certainly belongs, it must be acknowledged, to the calamities spoken of for us. Why then have we now seen in reality such plagues, which were not known in previous trials, as far as I know? It is for no other reason than because of the prediction that had been made. The ancients of distant times and those who, after them, observed the Law of Moses, when men were in some way like children and servile beings, unprepared for the fear of future and eternal punishment, could not avoid sinning.

For this reason, the Law, and especially the Lawgiver, did not threaten them with Gehenna and eternal fire. But as soon as they sinned, immediately after their sin, the Lawgiver punished them. For it is the nature of children and slaves to laugh at distant punishments. They fear, on the contrary, the blows hanging over their heads and correct themselves. It is also the nature of children to restrain themselves and take fright at the mere threat of their father. This is why, for the disciples of the Gospel, as for perfect people and sons, correction comes only through threat. Thus, Saint Paul, writing to the Romans, said: “For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption.” Those who formerly committed sins were immediately struck with punishments. This fact is attested historically throughout the God-inspired Book. When they forgot the service of God and the observance of the precepts of the Law to turn to the worship of demons, they immediately became slaves to other members of the tribe who were their close neighbors or to some of the barbarians beyond the borders, or they were corrected by other penalties. This is also what Saint Paul teaches when he mentions some of the ancients in this way in the Epistle to the Corinthians: “We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.”

Thus, for the reasons stated, there was no interval between sins and the punishments due to sins. But gradually, as time lengthened, the prophets indicated by their own words the penalties of the future and eternal punishment. Isaiah testifies to this when he says: “Who among you can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among you can dwell with everlasting burnings?” And again: “For their

worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched.” When we, who have believed in the Gospel, did what earned us adoption through the threat of Gehenna—that is, the unquenchable fire (Gehenna is so called, it seems to me, because it exists by birthright and without diminution; at all times it is renewed and burns; it does not need, to feed its ardor, what is necessary for material and visible fire)—we restrained the great and terrible impulses of sin, and nothing like this happened to us suddenly and unexpectedly. Sometimes, too, when we sinned, what happened to the ancients happened to us: the flood in the days of Noah; the flaming lightning and thunderbolts that fell on Sodom; in the days of Moses, the serpents whose bites were deadly.

But when it came to pass that, committing very grave sins every day and surpassing the ancients in a perversity contrary to the Law, we laughed at the threat of future punishments, paid no heed to them, considered even the name of Gehenna as foolishness, and mocked the thing itself as unworthy of belief, while each of us said: “I will enjoy this world, which is near and of short duration; I will come through all pleasures and perversions to burn eternally in the fire; I am pleased to seize the pleasures that are visible; as for the fables of the invisible future, I do not think of them"—then, it was then that the Lord showed us the beginnings of the flame in which we do not believe and which does not quench. He miraculously caused burning coals to come forth from the bodies of the demon-possessed who are tormented in this way, to make it manifestly known that the final fire is of the same nature and appearance as the fire that torments these people and in which the ignorant likewise do not believe. “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” He says. He acts thus out of great love for humanity. For as the last day already draws near the door, through very clear and manifest corrections and very painful calamities, He reminds us of what will come, not with words but with deeds, so that we may not fall into unavoidable and endless evils. All this He does and accomplishes, and He is even constrained to inflict punishments, concerned as He is to snatch us from evils from which there is no escape and for which there is no end. For from the beginning, He has used threat for this purpose, to frighten rather than to fulfill the threat.

And this that we have heard said—that those who suffer from this strange illness bleat like sheep and goats, bark like dogs, produce with their mouths other cries of

animals, feed on straw, grass, and food fit for other animals—this is a just correction of our foolishness. For as it is written: “Man, though in honor, did not understand; he is compared to the senseless beasts and made like them.” And since we have no sense even of the property or animal quality that is in our mind, He reproves us with unintelligible words, crying out as if citing a word of Scripture: “Your own mouth shall rebuke you, and not I.”

Let us not, therefore, wickedly set ourselves apart as those who remain outside this illness, when we, more than they, suffer from a lack of reason. He who utters the cry of a senseless animal harms no one; on the contrary, he is useful in arousing pity and sadness in those who hear him. But you, who possess the soul of a senseless and irrational animal, who have clothed yourself with the passions of many beasts and are as varied (πολύμορφος) as the phenomena called signs, because of your faults and your iniquity toward your neighbors, you are only hated and never pitied. And this is very just. For pity is taken on what is involuntary, but hatred falls on what is done with intent. The former indicates punishment, the latter wickedness. How do you differ from the lion, tell me, when, as the prophet David says: “You lurk in hiding like a lion in his den; you lie in wait to seize the poor; to seize the poor and drag him away?” What should we call you especially when you are rapacious like the lion, cruel like the wolf, irascible like the camel, voracious like the bear, lustful like the horse—”They became like stallions in heat,” says Jeremiah speaking of certain individuals—butting with horns like the bull, stretching out to kick like the donkey, leaping foolishly like the goat, cunning and deceitful like the fox? When a single soul suffers from all this, can it still be called a soul? Is it not rather a hard and cruel demon? What then? Was not the soul of the one who had to eat grass and straw and not be nourished like his fellow men blessed? Likewise, a certain prophet said, rebuking individuals who exposed themselves to murder: “They say: 'Slaughter men, for the calves have failed.'“ Let us therefore be ashamed and correct ourselves, O my friends and brothers, and look to our souls, even if late. Let us seek, through the manifest and certain pain of others and especially through the operation and correction of God, the hidden diseases within ourselves. And let us weep for ourselves, for having committed very grave faults, we are destined for the future and eternal punishments due to great sins.

That we are corrected in this world, which is near and has an end, is a great advantage for those who have sinned. For, whether in whole or in part, they will be released from their sins according to the just measure of God, who weighs what is due to each one with justice as much as with love for humanity. Listen to Him when He says through the prophet Isaiah concerning Jerusalem: “Comfort her, for her humiliation has been complete. Her fault has been forgiven, for she has received from the hand of the Lord double for all her sins.” This is why He adds consolation to the remission and pardon of the fault, because she has received double the punishments due to her sins, when the Babylonians tortured her wretchedly beyond reason. Our Lord also, in the Gospel, introduces Abraham answering in Sheol to the rich man who was burning and begging for his tongue to be cooled with a single drop: “Remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.” Let no one imagine either that those who have been struck with pain have been corrected because they sinned more than we did. In such cases, God begins first with those who are manifestly close to Him rather than with others. We can hear God saying in Ezekiel to the angels of punishment who were about to ravage Jerusalem: “Enter the city, destroy, and show no pity; begin at my sanctuary.” And when the sons of Aaron offered strange fire and were consumed for it, He said: “Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.” Saint Peter, the chief of the apostles, also wrote in agreement with this: “It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God.” If it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the Gospel of God? David also sings: “Great is the Lord and terrible for all who are around Him.”

Knowing this, let us forestall wrath with repentance; let us stop it when it is on the way and approaching. Let us not forget that we are like the righteous and do not deserve to suffer like those who have already suffered. God, who loves humanity, who is wise and waits for us all to return to virtue, does not direct the rod that strikes at us all at the same time; but He approaches sinners differently and in varied ways. Some He strikes and does them a service by remitting entirely the future and eternal punishment or by making this punishment very light. Others He corrects, makes them blush with shame, and converts them through the punishments of others; or, if by this example they are not terrified and do not

repent of their malice, He delivers them to the final punishments of justice, whether now or in the world to come. Let us not, therefore, look only to ancient times. If we do not think of the future, we will fall into foolish thoughts and say, as a prophet wrote in one place: “It is vain to serve God. What profit is it that we have kept His charge?” Then, but then, we will see clearly: “between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him. For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.” Now, I have reported these words with great care (φιλοπονία), so that we may know to look to the things of the world to come and not judge the justice of God and His retribution, which distributes and gives to each sinner what is fitting in due order, only by what is near.

It is high time now for us to see to it that, by giving satisfaction to God for our sins, we do not encounter on the way this pain that has befallen others, which, if we sought to please others, would come upon us as well. There are, indeed, remedies by which we can stop and interrupt the wrath that comes from God. For the moment, it is prayer, it is that with the help of supplications we implore and celebrate God together with the priests who burn incense according to the law and offer the sacrifice. Saint Paul, writing to the Hebrews, says: “Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name.” When the Israelites, speaking to Moses and murmuring blasphemies, suddenly fell in great numbers and died, Moses said to Aaron: “Take your censer, and put fire on it from off the altar and lay incense on it, and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone out from the Lord; the plague has begun.” Aaron took it, as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. Already the plague had begun among the people. He put on the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped. You see that the wrath that had begun was stopped by the priest entering and standing in the midst with incense, and that we must hasten to offer prayer at all times as the fruit of the lips. We know first that incense is the symbol of pure prayer and a pleasing aroma (εὐωδία). “Let my prayer be counted as incense before You,” it is said.

Let us therefore now use prayer with zeal and constancy. Let us not be satisfied with praying once or twice and then casting the matter aside as superfluous. But let us pray with tears, bending our knees to the ground. Let us supplicate; let us implore. I am ashamed and cover my face when we priests prostrate ourselves on the ground and pray, and when I see you standing in the midst of the people with your mouths open. The deacon cries out for all equally to bend the knee. Even if, so to speak, he did not cry out for all, you should nevertheless bow while the priests rise and stretch out their hands to heaven for you. But let us all pray together; let us kneel together; let us strike carefully (φιλοπονία), so that God may open to all the door of pardon. There is yet another remedy that heals and restrains wrath, and which must at the same time be mixed with prayer: I mean pity for the needy, by which we share our goods with the poor. Saint Paul also adds this to the words quoted above: “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” This virtue was also advised by the prophet Daniel to King Nebuchadnezzar when he foresaw, through wise interpretation of dreams, that his life would be transformed according to the habits of carnivores and the way of life of cattle, as we now learn is the case with those struck by this illness. He said: “Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.” We must therefore join to this the great remedy, very powerful and useful for all diseases and evils.

I say this: We must continually partake of the bloodless sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, which takes away the sin of the world, on the sole condition that we do not turn away from grace. This blood was also shown in figure and image in ancient times, when the lamb was sacrificed for the Passover that Moses had prescribed, and when the thresholds or lintels of each door were smeared with it; then, when the firstborn of the Egyptians were struck, the destroyer was kept away from the children of Israel and touched no smeared house. We too, let us smear the spiritual doors of our house—that is, our mouths—with the divine blood. Thus we will escape the destroyer, and by eating the body of God and the Word made flesh and filling our inner selves with holiness, we will reject and drive away from us all irrational and bestial passions; we will be for the warlike demons not only indomitable but also fearsome, especially if we add fasting, that most useful and

excellent weapon against evil spirits; we will be saved from wrath, both present and future; and we will merit the kingdom of heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, honor, and eternal power. Amen.

**HOMILY 54 TO THOSE WHO, AFTER PRAYER, GO TO THE THEATER. IT IS CONTRARY TO THE LAW TO ATTEND THESE SPECTACLES. WE MUST FORESTALL THROUGH WORKS OF PENANCE THE NECESSITY OF THE WRATH THAT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AND FREQUENTLY PARTAKE IN THE HOLY AND ADORED MYSTERIES.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Once again, I have come forward, though I lack all ability to speak or teach anything useful, obscured as I am by the cloud of material concerns in which this holy and immaterial Church is inconveniently entangled. People burden it successively with foreign and non-priestly loads. How could external troubles not harm the religious interior? Compelled and driven by this present necessity, like someone burning in fire, I am pushed to this, not willingly. What wonder is it if I, who bring forth from myself countless and incalculable ulcers, have endured this pain without being able to remain silent? When the prophet Jeremiah, who from his mother's womb was not afraid of the wrath he was threatened with, thought to remain silent, he was inflamed and burned in his heart and was forced to speak. Therefore, he said: "I will call impiety and misery because the word of the Lord has been for me an outrage and a derision all day long. And I said: I will not name the name of the Lord, nor will I speak in His name. And it was in my heart like a burning fire, flaming and pressing in my bones, and I could not bear it."

It is enough, as I have said, that the bond of my tongue is weak, that this storm of worldly events arises, along with the external trouble of those who fight against the orthodox word. If I think, like Jeremiah, that the word of the Lord has been for me too an outrage and a derision, I will necessarily say, like him: "I said: I will not name the name of the Lord, nor will I speak in His name." I will pray that a prison door be placed on my lips and that I be forced into complete silence. Otherwise, the laughter and open derision for the words of the Lord will not prevent me from soon preaching universal prayers in the Church, tears, the confession of sins, fasting, and, to put it simply, correction through penance, because of this already threatening scourge that is, so to speak, near and hanging over our heads—terrible to hear. You, or rather many of you—for I must not accuse all—will go to the spectacle of the hippodrome and to that temple of laughter, or, to name it more aptly, of the ardor of prostitution, that theater of all lust. But you will say that you

have not neglected prayers or assemblies in the church and that you have participated in the same way in the spectacles. Yet have you not heard Saint Paul writing to the Corinthians: “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.” Does not a wise man say very well: “One who builds and one who tears down—what does it serve but to take trouble? He who bathes and washes because of a dead man and then touches him—what profit does he gain from his bath?” So too a man who fasts for his sins and then goes on to commit the same faults. This is the act of those who act contrary to the law and are full of perversity. They imagine partaking of the table and the cup, eating and drinking, and doing what pleases them. The priestly book testifies about such people, saying: “They eat the bread of impiety and are drunk with illicit wine.”

And what perversity is there, one might say, in watching a horse race? A great one, not a small one. I will answer you freely, O man! First: every spectacle is necessarily consecrated to one of the falsely named gods and given in their honor—to Neptune, the spectacle of horses; to Mercury, the spectacle of wrestlers who fight alone; to Artemis, that of wrestlers who fight with animals; to Bacchus, the theatrical performances. How could what brings joy and pleasure to demons please God? How could we run to these spectacles, which we legally renounced when we were enrolled for the service of Christ, when we subscribed to acts of obedience to Him, and when we were prepared to merit the divine and salutary baptism? These spectacles are, in fact, the pomps of Satan and the worship of his feasts, which we have renounced. Second: even if one were to say, “The performances are not given in honor of demons but for our pleasure,” we would anger the Creator if we used animals deprived of reason in a manner contrary to His commandments. Each of them was created to fulfill some need of worldly life, not for excessive and useless amusement.

The horse was given to men so that, mounted on this animal, they might quickly accomplish their journeys and go out against the warriors who come against them. It is a help and an auxiliary in combat against enemies. This is also what He “who spoke to Job from the whirlwind and the clouds” says: “Have you given the horse his strength? Have you clothed his neck with thunder? He goes to meet the armed men, laughs at fear, and does not turn away from the sword. When the trumpet

sounds, he says, ‘Aha!’ From afar he smells the battle.” It is also written in Proverbs: “The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory comes from the Lord.” Therefore, this animal was introduced to serve human life, not so that you might exhaust it by making it run seven laps around the circus, sending chariot against chariot, crushing its feet with the speed of wheels, nor that you might rejoice and applaud at a miserable and deplorable fall. This is not what the divine book prescribes and teaches you, but the opposite. When you act thus, it writes for you the words of cruelty and iniquity, saying: “The righteous man regards the life of his beast, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.” What the holy and wise Paul says—”Does God care about oxen?”—has another meaning. For, speaking to the Corinthians, he said that “those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” “Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Who feeds a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a man? Or does the law not say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses: ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.’ Does God care about oxen?” This legal commandment, which orders not to muzzle the ox that treads the grain, teaches us that God made the law not because He cared about equity for the oxen. What is odious, then, about oxen being restrained and held on the threshing floor so that they may do their service carefully and not occupy themselves with their bellies at an inopportune time? But by this commandment, He teaches us that it is just for those who work to be nourished by the fruit of their labor. That God cares for all, provides for all, and loves all as God is a known and evident thing. The psalmist prophet says to Him: “You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.” A wise man also says: “Because You can do all things, You are merciful to all.” Another writes: “The mercy of man is for his neighbor, but the mercy of the Lord is upon all flesh.” It is no reason, because some animals have been given to men to be killed and eaten, that during their lives we should not use them with mercy, have no pity for them, and, for a diabolical amusement and pleasure, make a vain and harmful trade of their exhaustion, fatigue, and death.

Diabolical is the spectacle of horses, as evidenced by the tricks and cunning means practiced there, the rivalry resembling enchantment, the horrible, cruel, and illegal murders of the deceitful who show audacity against a young and weak age (?). These spectacles (?) can greatly anger God; they deserve numerous thunderclaps

and flaming lightning. Even if the entertainment were free of such things, we would judge it by its fruits. “By their fruits you shall know them.” Such is the decree of Christ, God and Savior, who does not lie. Now, what are the fruits of these horse fights? Quarrels, blasphemies, struggles, confusion among people, clamor, stone-throwing attacks, civil wars, murders, fires. How often does the purest of spectators fall into one of these sins? Either he shouts, or he quarrels, or he blasphemes, or he is carried away by anger and insult. And what punishment results from this? God is turned away and alienated. Is there a harsher penalty? Now listen concerning the clamor, which is considered lesser than other things: “The Lord said: ‘The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very grave.’” This suffices to show what clamor is. It is first the accusation of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord also says through the prophet Isaiah: “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant planting. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry.” What then? Is clamor subject to accusation? Is quarreling praiseworthy? Not at all. See how God, through the prophet Ezekiel, places it among the great subjects of blame when He says: “The Israelites will not listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to Me. Because all the house of Israel are stubborn and hard-hearted.” You will wonder why quarreling is ranked with disobedience and hardness of heart. Saint Paul includes all these vices as things that grieve and irritate the Holy Spirit. For he writes thus: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.”

Why then do we go to the spectacle of the hippodrome? So that all these vices may boil like a bad current in a lake, and not so that, remaining rather at rest, we pray God to forgive us when, occupied with worldly affairs, we are unwillingly drawn into clamor, blasphemous speech, or anger. But let us examine the theaters, these places of spectacles, and see if they are not harmful and pernicious, and not, as is thought and said, amusing and joyful. I leave aside the orchestra, that is, the exuberant group dance that effeminates virile bodies, and those erotic or amorous songs that teach softness, dissolve the vigor of the soul, and insert into it the rage of all vile passions, entangling and burying it under the burden and intoxication of pleasures. What shall we say of the spectators of the mimes, these people of

ridicule? Do we not excite the wrath and anger of God when we laugh at seeing a man struck in the face—a man whom God created, in whose face God breathed the breath of life so that he might be respected even by angels, and whom the Word of God honored by becoming man for us, when He rose from the dead and breathed on the Apostles, saying: "Receive the Holy Spirit."

A face so honored—nay, doubly celebrated—do you not think it is a subject of terror and dread even for the heavenly hosts when it is outrageously struck and turned into ridicule? Then tell me, do you laugh at things over which you ought to weep and lament? Where shall I place that pure bed, that honorable union which becomes a subject of jest? And the chaste community which, like an adulteress, is crushed by derision? And the members of the body that are exposed—those by whom children are procreated, by whom the transmission of our race is preserved? And the natural part that should not be spoken of, which is ridiculed in a shameful and odious manner? And above all, that mystery full of modesty and chastity? Respect, O man—if you would respect nothing else—your form, which was created by God. Respect the second divine creation, for which the Word of God, taking a body from the Virgin, associated Himself with you. Why laugh at yourself, like those who, in madness and without feeling, tear or eat their own flesh? Why then, when adultery is committed against you outrageously, do you weep and groan and think your life is no longer a life? Are you grieved when you see the sun, and do you believe everything is upside down? Do you write a sentence of condemnation to prison against the adulterer? Do you declare death too light a punishment for him? How often would you wish to destroy the sinner? When you see perverse representations of this kind in that odious theater of play, you burst into laughter, overflow with effusions, and call this deplorable spectacle joy and amusement. With what eyes will you look at your wife when you return home? How will you demand chastity from her—you, the spectator of the impurity of these frightful, improper, and immoral spectacles, you who have aroused countless passions and nourish in your mind the images of vices like a fire smoldering and burning in the woods?

"What shall I do?" he says. "Behold, the theater of games is open and calls me to the spectacle!" But if it were closed, would there be need for these words, O my good man? How would you see what is not performed? It would be a grace of

necessity, not of your will. Since it is open, pass before it quickly, with firmness and philosophy. Leave unvisited the actors who are there ready. Show that all this is futile and useless. For it does not suffice, for the excuse of those who are caught, that the theater is prepared and arranged, that those who eagerly take their seats there are attracted and deceived. The one who steals clothes could also say that, having seen clothes and gold, he was tempted in his mind and deceived. The one who looks with a spirit of fornication, without guarding himself, will excuse himself on the beauty of women. But it is well known that he who firmly distances himself from the temptations within his reach will deserve, because he practices virtue, the crown and rewards of victory. Flee, therefore, with all your might the spectacles, the suffocation of souls, the abyss of Satan, the adorned trickery, the pleasant trickery ("euprepeia"), the harm suffered insensibly, the easy, evident, and certain ruin.

If someone drags you there, drag him in the opposite direction to the church, saying to him this word of Scripture: "Turn your foot away from the evil path. The ways of the right hand God knows, but the ways of the crooked are those of the left." Show him at length the difference between these two paths. Show the end of each. Mock and blame before him the fleeting state and the brief duration of this passing amusement. Frighten him, depict for him the future tribunal of Christ. Bring him to the hope of the blessed, infinite life prepared for the just. Enclose him on all sides. Do not miss his salvation. Do not lose the prey. If you see him resisting too strongly in the struggle, striving to triumph in evil, and seeking by trickery or violence to drag you toward vice, then resort to just anger, reject a bad friendship or companionship, hasten to flee the wicked.

Remember the spiritual Lawgiver who orders and commands you to be angry and not to sin. Thus Phinehas was angry and, when he had struck and pierced with his spear those who committed fornication, the scourge ceased (?). Thus Moses, the meekest and humblest of men, was angry with those who transgressed the laws of God, while he endured his personal injuries meekly and humbly. When the family of Dathan and Abiram and the assembly of the family of Korah rose up against him out of jealousy and outrageously, the lawgiver and leader of the people fell on his face before them, and he exhorted and entreated the insulters not to expose themselves to the wrath from on high. As they remained disobedient and proud, in

the end he sent them to hell. We must endure and bear humbly and philosophically the insults and injustices done to us, but those directed against God and fomented against His glory, we must guard against them with anger and as harshly as possible. Therefore, a prophet has said: “Let the meek man become warlike.” Humility and meekness that are unintelligent and without reason are the traits of sheep, not of reasonable men. Therefore, irascibility is found in our soul to exhort and excite us to courage, that we may use it against the softness of the passions and fight with it for the laws of God and for the truth.

But I do not know why, after the sermon I preached to you before in the church, when I expected to see you doing good works, I speak to you again about avoiding evil. I return to speak of vice and virtue because we need to practice many good works to escape this wrath hanging over us, which is now on its way to other cities. It has not yet departed from the city of Alexandria, whose healthy inhabitants it continues to devour, growing and spreading to the point that the people close not only the theaters but also the taverns, the houses of wine merchants, the shops of raw and cooked meats and all kinds of food offering some pleasure, and in their mourning, they eat only bread and dried vegetables. They do nothing else but beseech God every day with ardent prayers.

Let us seize this necessity to show voluntary penance and obtain, besides the benefit of avoiding wrath, the reward due in such cases. For it is not without recompense that one thinks on his own: “If such calamities befell us, what would we not do to escape them?” Before they come, let us live vigilantly (“phrontizontes”) and philosophically. If, through this correction and fear, we do not convert, will we not be fools and strangers to God, delivered to complete ruin, and fallen into the deep pit? Thus, the word written by Jeremiah can be seen as evident: “Be instructed, O Jerusalem, with pain and the rod, lest My soul depart from you, and I make you a desolate land, uninhabited.” Therefore, it is terrified and trembling that I have stopped at these words, and I have pronounced aloud this verse of the holy Apostle Paul: “While we have time, let us do good.” We have great need of much foresight. We await the violent assault of demons against us. Let us fortify ourselves with the wall of divine help. What is this wall? The fear of God. “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them.”

Consider that the guard of a single angel around you takes the place and strength of an entire army camp and all the soldiers. And also, to each of those who fear the Lord is attached an angel for his guard. Therefore, speaking of chaste men, we say: "Your angel." In the Acts of the Apostles, when Peter, arrested and put in prison by Herod, unexpectedly knocked at the door of a house, those inside, perplexed and incredulous, said to the girl who announced him: "It is his angel." And what is surprising about this, when every little child has his own determined and distinct guardian angel? The Lord says in the Gospel: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven." Not as if one could see the face of God. For how could He who has neither form nor body have a face? Or how could the invisible Being be seen? But it is the habit of Holy Scripture to call "face" the action that God does for us. Thus the Psalmist has said: "Do not hide Your face from me," and: "Make Your face shine upon Your servant." The angels therefore see—that is, consider—what the action and solicitude of God are for the little children, and they guard them by watching with care and vigilance.

Do you understand, O women, what harm you do to these little ones when you send them to the theater? You strip these beings you love of the help and guard of angels and prepare them to suffer the harm of the Evil One. This would be defined as the act of enemies, not mothers! Let us all run to the church, young and old, men and women, people of all kinds and sizes. Thus, let us render untroubled the guard of angels around us, especially by partaking of the holy mysteries, by the power of which we will be anointed and strengthened. Then the angels will dwell near us, not only for our own guard but also in honor of their Master, and they will be firm and persevering for our souls and bodies, which will be like angelic dwellings in which the King dwells.

Let no one say to me: "I fear the communion of the mysteries, and I abstain from it." For Saint Paul stops me when he says: "He who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgment to himself. It is for this reason that, once or twice a year, I approach the fearful table with circumspection." And is this, tell me, what you regard as an obstacle, because the Apostle tells you: "Purify yourself every day and enjoy this immortal food, of which you must neither eat nor drink unworthily." If

you were reminded, when you must appear before a king, that you must make your entry in a fitting manner, with modest bearing and gait, we would not say that you have been turned away from the dwelling of kings but rather encouraged to enter it and enjoy the honor by presenting yourself fittingly. And yet, when you approach once a year, you do not purify yourself beforehand for the whole year worthily by this day in which you wish to approach. If it is not so, does your subtlety have any reason? Quite the contrary. When you have heaped up the impurity of many months and a great mass of sins, you approach rather very unworthily. He who approaches continually knows that he is fully prepared to present himself before the King, to greet Him, and to receive Him within. With all his strength and power, he avoids many sins. But you, after fixing a time to abstain afterward, envision a long delay and, with assurance and without fear, do all that pleases you until that day comes when there would not even be an entry for the King, who would find your dwelling closed. We must therefore purify ourselves as much as possible and continually approach the Pure One. The sun is visible to healthy eyes, but that is no reason for those with weak sight to disdain treatment to be completely deprived of the brightness of its rays.

Do you not know that this spiritual and bloodless sacrifice is found in the legal service that was once accomplished by blood, when, every morning and evening, it was offered in expiation? From this, one must know that there is only one and the same sacrifice which, according to the Law, was offered in the morning and at the beginning of the knowledge of God, and which, according to the Gospel, was immolated for the end of the days of the world and in the evening, spiritually and more perfectly. This sacrifice was also called the perpetual sacrifice because it was offered perpetually and without interruption. If, then, all were like you, who present yourself only once a year, the sacrifice would remain a non-sacrifice, the perpetuity of the immolation would be interrupted, expiation would cease, the altar would be without service. Who would take away the sin of the world, which needs purification at all times? You see into how many insanities we would fall if we obeyed our inner decisions and not the Law. Occupying ourselves with doing good works by all means, let us partake of the life-giving sacrifice. For it is not possible that someone believes and does not partake of it if he wishes to live the true life, just as he cannot live without breathing air. For this reason also, we who have believed in Christ live, move, and exist through Him. To Him be eternal glory.

Amen!

## HOMILY 55 A FAREWELL ADDRESS, AS HE PREPARED TO DEPART TO VISIT THE HOLY CHURCHES OF THE COUNTRYSIDE AND CITIES AND THE SACRED MONASTERIES OF THE ASCETICS. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mindful of following the law handed down to us by the Fathers, we will depart tomorrow to visit the holy churches of the countryside and cities and the priestly monasteries of the ascetics who dedicate themselves to monastic life. God will guide our journey according to His word, as David recounted in the Psalms. For the law requires that whoever, at any time, occupies this apostolic seat, must, upon leaving the city, visit the flock of the diocese. I believe this law is fitting. How could it not be fitting, being both ancient and honored, and founded not only on the decisions of the Fathers but also on the words of the God-inspired Book? It is written that the prophet Samuel led an ascetic life in Ramah, where he habitually resided, served at the altar, and performed priestly duties. When he made sacrifices for the people, he traveled to famous and holy places, visiting and judging Israel. The priestly Book states: "Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he traveled each year, circulating through Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all these holy places. His return was to Ramah, where his home was, and there he judged Israel and built an altar to the Lord." This custom of visiting and traveling, fitting for those entrusted with leading the people, was also practiced by the Apostles. It is written in the Acts of the Apostles: "After some days, Paul said to Barnabas: 'Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, to see how they are doing.'"

It has already been shown that this journey is lawful and necessary, not superfluous or idle. But you, in what state do you think I will be when I cease for a short time to mingle with you, the friends of God? Or what words will I use if I prolong my absence and deprive myself of your priestly presence? Are they not the words that Saint Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: 'We, brothers, having been orphaned from you for a short time—in presence, not in heart—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face'? Who could adequately admire the power of these words? Amid them, I am struck with awe when I see mingled in them the charity that Christ ignited, He who said: 'I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!' It is of this charity that the bride in the Song of

Songs, symbolizing the Church in advance, says: 'Many waters cannot quench love, nor can rivers drown it.'"

First, this very brief separation—I do not say "journey"—he calls an orphanhood that lasted for a moment. For he did not say, "When we were separated from you," but "When we were made orphans of you," showing that charity is like filial and paternal love, possessing the power of nature—indeed, for many, it is even stronger than natural love. But here he returns to the natural order: taking the figure of a father, Saint Paul called himself an orphan, implying that he held both loves simultaneously—paternal and filial—loving as a father who suffers in his love and as a child who cannot bear orphanhood. A father might endure separation from his children, but a son lacks the philosophy or strength to do so; he immediately gives way to tears and sobs. He does not merely say, "When we were made orphans," but "When we were made greatly orphans of you." Though he had been taken from them by necessity and almost by force, he expressed this through an intensification of his language: "We were made greatly orphans of you."

Second, he added that he was separated in presence but not in heart, indicating that in thought he still moved among them, comforting himself in this way. He burned and was inflamed by the loss of their bodily presence, which is why he said: "We were all the more eager with great desire to see your face." In which of these words should I place the meaning? In "all the more"? In "We were eager"? In "With great desire"? All these words show me that the friend was inflamed like one who is anxious, eager, and desperate to see without measure or restraint the one he loves. Such was Paul, who carried Christ within him and, as from a source of divine love, poured out streams of divine and fiery words and meanings. When I, the small one, see the image of his great virtue and the abundance of your spiritual beauty, I am struck in my soul because of you, though I am a shameful and useless friend, dragged away from you by force and not by choice. But since we have been redeemed at a great price—the blood of Christ—we must absolutely follow the Master's commandments and walk the path laid before us.

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Remember me in the psalmody of the night vigils, in the evening prayers, because

of the wrath that had come upon us, and for the supplications we deemed necessary to offer twice a week throughout this month. We had to endure this labor until we learned that our brothers, afflicted by this evil, were delivered from this terrible scourge. I feared causing you anguish and burdening you with a weight without your fulfilling the commandment, you who had shown your will by calling joy from theaters and vain amusements. Go to church constantly and regularly. There, stretching out your hands, implore God to guide you to every good work and to aid you. Do not give way to fear, lest, while you are unguarded, the demons, like certain barbarians, assail you. Let them not see that you are unfortified and deprived of God's help. They have a sharp, vigilant, attentive, and murderous gaze, "for they will not sleep unless they have done harm; sleep is banished from their eyes, and they do not slumber," says the priestly Book. Strengthen yourselves on all sides with faith and purity of flesh, making the sign of the cross on your forehead and clothing yourselves in the power of the holy mysteries like a spiritual armor. By abundant mercy for the needy, you will draw mercy from above. And we, though absent from you, will assist you by beseeching those who have left the world and are close to God, that they may extend their pure and swift prayers for you—prayers unhindered by materiality or distraction, soaring to heaven. We believe in one God in the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. May He be like a triple and unassailable wall for the city, terrible and invincible to Satan and the demons. Let praise rise above all to the Savior of our souls, to whom belong glory, honor, and power for eternity. Amen!

**HOMILY 56 ON HIS ARRIVAL IN KINNESRIN AND HIS RECEPTION BY THE FAITHFUL OF THE CITY. ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THIS HOMILY HAD BEEN DELIVERED WHEN IT WAS INTERRUPTED DUE TO A MUNICIPAL AFFAIR AND A RIOT, AND IT WAS RESUMED LATER AT THE END.** TABLE OF CONTENTS

When Moses the Great ascended the mountain of Sinai, when he entered the midst of the cloud, when he remained forty days without taking food and was with the Lawgiver, he was initiated into the mysteries of the law. Then he descended, carrying in his hands those blessed tablets that had been written by the finger of God. The incorporeal finger of God is the Holy Spirit. All that God writes is written by the Spirit. This is why every divine book is said to be inspired by God. When the Pharisees said of our Savior Christ that he cast out demons by Beelzebub, Matthew says that he answered them and said: "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." Luke, writing the same thing, says that our Lord said to the blasphemers: "If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." When the magicians and sorcerers of Pharaoh sought, as it is written, to perform the wonders that had been accomplished by the hand of Moses and were defeated, astonished by the invincible power of the Spirit who worked these wonders, they cried out: "This is the work of the finger of God." What Moses did as a servant and minister was the work of grace operating through his hands to perform these miracles. But Christ, the Spirit belonged to him as the Son, it was in his nature and of the same essence. This is why he breathed on his disciples, saying: "Receive the Holy Spirit." It is he who, in the beginning, formed man from the dust of the earth and breathed into his face the breath of life. All that exists was made by the Father through the Word and the Son and by the Spirit, who participated in it and hovered over the waters that he struck, and through him he gave being to all. Through him we also live, move, and exist. He is the one who maintains the state of what exists.

Seeing that the people had become senseless, insulting, and guilty, that they had made for themselves, instead of the glory of God, an image of a calf grazing on grass—this is how the Book mocks their fault in a beautiful manner—he threw down these tablets written by God and broke them. For God established the law for those who are awake and not for those who are drunk. But when they repented of

their sin, he wrote the same law again on other tablets. First, however, Moses heard these words: "Come up to me on the mountain, and I will give you these stone tablets, the law and the commandments that I have written, so that you may teach them." After the sin, he did not speak thus, but: "Cut for yourself two stone tablets like the first ones; come up to me on the mountain, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets that you broke." This word shows symbolically that when God created man in the beginning and then recreated him anew through the new baptism of the child, he wrote on the tablets of his heart, which were pure, which he had created and renewed, his own laws: first the natural law, and at the end the evangelical and spiritual law. If someone breaks these tablets of the heart through sin, he is no longer worthy of the same book written by the finger of God, unless he himself carves these tablets for himself through repentance, erasing the horror of sin within himself through pure works.

If therefore the universal King and Master did not refuse or reject, but deigned to give his law again a second time to the people who had angered him, what excuse would we have, we who are dust and ashes, as it is written, if we did not address the same words to you, the beloved sheep of Christ who breathe divine zeal, words that put an end to the trouble of some? I must therefore repeat the words that have already been spoken. For you, it is the same discourse that you will hear. I know perfectly well that it is not on uncarved tablets but on the purified tablets of your heart that I will deposit it. Many reasons compel me not to pass through your city in silence, but to make my voice heard in this faithful and God-loving assembly, which is the Church of the living God, and to show only the goodwill of my own thought, although I have nothing powerful or particularly useful to say. One reason, more than any other, inflames and awakens me. But thought would refuse to advance and hasten without the organ of the tongue, if that were possible. The tongue precedes thought. What, then, is this reason? It is that this church not only confesses the orthodox faith without falsehood but also accepts the danger of suffering for it if the occasion arises, and that, like a true daughter, it preserves the maternal image of the apostolic Church that was built in Antioch. How, then, could I not greet it with all my voice and embrace it paternally? It is also dear to the fathers who perfect in virtue and ardently love those of their sons who particularly preserve the image of those who begot them, who resemble them in form and the beauty of their countenance, and who possess the character of their fathers. What,

then, is the character of the apostolic Church established in Antioch? It cries out to Emmanuel with Saint Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." It confesses one and the same Christ and Son of the living God, the same God and the same true man, and not one and another, as the Chalcedonians have perversely divided him into a double nature after the inexpressible union. For Saint Peter did not say: "You are the Christ in whom resides the Son of the living God," so that one might understand another within another, as those who divide him wish. But he confessed: "You are the Christ and the Son of the living God," using the word "you are" in its general and ordinary sense.

As for the name of Christ, it is the one that suits the abnegation made for us, and it is human. He was called Christ when he became man without undergoing change, without distancing his divine nature from himself, and without needing to do so. He was anointed for us with the mystical oil as the principle of our race and the second Adam, and to send us the adoption of sons and the grace that operates through the Spirit. These things had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah, who says for their time: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me." He clearly shows by these words that Christ took upon himself for us the humility and abasement of abnegation, and the name and the work. He says, in fact, "the Spirit," which is in me by nature, because it is of the same essence and divinity. It came upon me, as if it came from outside and settled upon me through the waters of the Jordan like a dove, not as if it were not in me, but because "he has anointed me." Why, then, did he wish and accept to be anointed? If not for us, who were deprived of the Spirit, because of that ancient decree of God who had said: "My Spirit will not dwell in these men because they are flesh."

The appellation "Son of the living God" suits God, and the Word suits the one "who was begotten before the ages divinely from the Father." For if he had said: "You are the son of God," one might perhaps understand this appellation in a general sense and not as proper to him and belonging to him particularly. It is said, in fact, of Israel as representing the person of God: "My firstborn son, Israel." But he added "living" to show that it is proper and special, and not shared. When Saint Peter considered him in full clarity, when he was illuminated in the vision of his spirit by the so splendid beauty of the divinity and when he received a vision not of flesh and blood but a vision from above, he found that he was the life of the Life,

of the Father, and the true light of the true Light. Filled with wonder and the Spirit, he cried out: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," who made himself humble for me and who is exalted because of the sublimity of the nature from above; who is one of two without confusion, namely of divinity and humanity, in one person and one hypostasis; such he is and is known. One must confess the nature of the Word and of him who was incarnated in flesh of the same essence as ours, who possesses a soul endowed with reason.

This beautiful orthodox confession, which is naturally found in the person of the mother of the Eastern churches, I see that it also shines in the countenance of this church as in a true daughter. And when I examine it carefully, I find it as the Apostle says: "There is in her neither stain nor wrinkle nor anything of the sort; but she is holy and without blemish." She is not adorned with borrowed beauty, with the makeup with which one covers the face, as prostitutes do, that is, with the unstable, atheistic, and dreamy imagination of Eutyches. Nor does she alter her maternal beauty by the obscurity of the worship of the Nestorian man, still less by the turpitude and Jewish horror, I mean by the duality of natures. This is why she ran to me with joy as to a father; she came to meet me, crowding outside the city gates, confident that I had changed nothing of the familial beauty. Also, showing by her works a virtue worthy of faith, although I am not a prophet but a sinner and a weak man, she welcomed me as a prophet, expecting to receive the prophet's reward, because of him who promised without lying and said: "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward." Like those who once greeted Samuel upon receiving him, she also cried out: "Peace be with your coming, O seer!" This is why we too, paying her with evangelical words according to the commandment of our Savior, say: "Peace be to this house!" And as she is the house of him who is worthy, may our peace come upon her particularly, and may it remain stable, unchanging. She has truly manifested herself because she received me, who am nothing, as an angel of God, even more as Christ himself when he sat on a colt, and she did not despise or reject, as Saint Paul says writing to the Galatians. Christ, too, who stands at the door, she nourishes him when he is in need; she shelters him under her roof when he is a stranger; when he is naked, she clothes him; when he is oppressed by sickness or in prison, she visits him. This is why we say again: May our peace come upon her by the grace of him who said: "I give you my peace, I leave you my peace." By surrounding her with this peace as

with a powerful wall, may he guard her from all harm; may he save her from the hatred of the Slanderer; and may he show that she has been called by the very facts Chaleis, that is, of bronze; that this name is not a lie because she shines and gleams. May she be strengthened and made powerful by the purity of the orthodox faith. May she reject and drive away the rust of heretical perversity. When I say to her what God once said to the prophet Jeremiah: "Behold, I have set you this day as a fortified city and as a powerful wall of bronze," may all the people respond: Amen, amen! And in return, may this people give me in turn, as provisions for the journey, their sacerdotal prayers. May they raise glory to the dispenser of all good things, to whom belong glory and power forever. Amen!

## HOMILY 57 ON THE FACT THAT HE WAS RETAINED BY THE FAITHFUL OF KINNESRIN FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR SERGIUS; AND ON THIS MARTYR AND ON BACCHUS, WHO TRIUMPHED IN COMBAT AT THE SAME TIME AS HIM. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Those who offer foreigners a warm and friendly welcome, gathering the finest and best of foods and dishes, take the occasion of a meal and a feast to receive those who have come to them. Thus acted Abraham when he welcomed the three angels, or rather God Himself, who appeared in the form of angels and in the likeness of men, and who, in figure and symbol, made known a single essence and divinity in three persons. This is what the sacred book shows by saying: "God appeared to him near the oak of Mamre," and it adds further: "Having lifted his eyes, he saw and behold, three men stood before him." He ran towards the three, speaking to them as to one: "Seeing them," says the Book, "he ran to meet them, going out from the door of his tent." Retaining us, you have not allowed us to return to our dwelling before partaking in this joyful feast, rejoicing with you, and celebrating with you the commemoration of the combats of Sergius the martyr. How then shall I respond to this invitation to such a solemn feast and to the celebration of this most admirable saint? Shall I remain silent, without offering to those who have invited me some words to complete the feast and add to its splendor and solemnity, lest I resemble the gluttonous guests, or worse, those vile parasites who cling to tables with no other concern than to fill their bellies beyond satiety? Never do they lift their eyes to the heavens or praise Him who has given us, for the sustenance of our existence, these useful and fitting foods with such great variety and diversity. Perhaps, too, if I wished to remain silent, the splendor of the martyr's combats would not permit it. He who is recalled anew by memory at the time of his martyrdom—it seems to me I see him standing before the tyrant Maximian with Bacchus, who shared the same service and equaled him in combat. The tyran enacts as law every design against religion, though the law ought to be established justly. I said 'with Bacchus' because we must not separate in speech those whom the crown of martyrdom has united. They were alike in stature, in countenance, in greatness. They were young in body, even younger in spirit. They served and were counted among the warriors surrounding the king. They held the first rank and bore the title of commander, Sergius as the leader and Bacchus as his second; both were

united in the same spirit of piety. They were called Christians, and they were. They endured the same combat for the truth.

Certain individuals wrote to the king against them, accusing and charging them, as if of terrible faults, for neither sacrificing nor offering libations to demons. They inflamed the anger of the king, who was inclined to it, saying of them: 'It is thanks to his friendship that they have come to such license.' At first, the king did not believe it; then he led them to the temple of Zeus, the impure and falsely named god. He ate with his ministers of the polluted sacrifices and tried to incite these valiant men to partake of this defiled food. He heard them say that one must not sacrifice to inanimate idols and to the images of wicked demons 'who have a mouth and do not speak, who have ears and do not hear,' and other similar things by which the Psalmist mocked their insensibility and immobility. Enraged and boiling with anger and pride, he ordered their belts to be cut and the golden ornament, customarily worn by warriors who approach kings, to be removed from their attire. They were to be led into the marketplace dressed in women's tunics. But in this matter, they knew how to oppose him, saying by their very actions—these invincible confessors from all sides, who had learned to outwit the deceiver, as David says, and to turn to good the stratagems of the Slanderer and his instruments: 'O you who strive against God, do you think to weaken our valiant souls by a feminine appearance? You may force the body to wear a woman's garment, but you will not clothe our sound and firm spirit with cowardice. We will show you by deeds that we hold as true the precept and commandment that God pronounced through Moses: "A man shall not wear a woman's garment." For indeed, the female sex is no hindrance for most women to go forth with a manly spirit to the combats for religion and to gird themselves with the crown of victory over the Slanderer.'

He says: 'What need have you, O fools, to adore this son of a carpenter, born of a virgin defiled by fornication before the lawful nuptials? He whom the Jews, because He transgressed the law and stirred up trouble among their people, condemned to the torment of the cross.' At these words, the saints, sharpening their divinely speaking tongues with prayers, said: 'Christ was not born like your ridiculous gods, who were wretched and debauched men, born of unlawful unions and adultery. But because He is God, He is truly the son of the carpenter; He is of

God the Father through His Word and His Wisdom, He is life itself, and He was begotten of Him before the worlds, without body and without suffering. He fashioned us for heaven and earth. Every superior creature of heaven in the form of angels, though it did not exist, He brought into being. He willed to become man without change (of nature) and voluntarily for our sake, who were lost (by sin). He was begotten by the Holy Spirit without suffering or sin from a virgin mother. By enduring in the flesh and willingly death on the cross, He made known resurrected from the dead on the third day. He loosened the bonds of hell, and the proof lies in the fact that many bodies of saints who were buried rose and hastened to the holy city." At these words, the tyrant remained as if mute and voiceless, and by this theology, he was, as it were, struck with dizziness and paralysis. He knew not what to do but was vanquished by their courage. He ordered that they be taken to a region of Mesopotamia that the locals call Euphratensis and that they be delivered to Antiochus, the commander of the troops stationed there, who had been called by them to take command. This impious king thought this order would bring them shame and contempt. Antiochus, obeying the order as far as possible and as was fitting, questioned them and examined their conduct through questions and trials. Seeing their inflexibility, he immediately ordered the divine Sergius to be imprisoned. As for the blessed Bacchus, he ordered him to be struck on the stomach with ox sinews and then to receive the same blows on the back. After enduring these countless blows without faltering in spirit or uttering a weak or cowardly word, the martyr entrusted his crowned soul to Christ, the author of the combat, while his body was cast into the wilderness. This body was miraculously preserved by wild beasts without harm until some of those accustomed to practicing divine mercy and some chaste Brothers wrapped it in a shroud and committed it to the tomb."

But Sergius was led to even loftier struggles when Bacchus appeared to him at night, calling him to the abodes of the blessed and inspiring him with inexpressible courage and joy. This harsh and very cruel judge devised for him a bitter and unbearable torment. He had shoes nailed with sharp spikes prepared, into which he ordered Sergius's feet to be placed, and he was made to run before his chariot from one fortress to another, nine miles distant. Sergius did this with joy, saying, following the Apostle's instruction: 'I will shod and bind my feet in the preparation of the Gospel of peace! It is much for me to resemble the feet of Christ our Savior,

which were pierced for me. I groan still for the lack of resemblance in the nails, because my hands too have not been nailed as His were.' Strengthened by these words of piety, on which he leaned confidently and firmly as on a staff, the martyr advanced and completed his course in the path laid out for him in this way. At night, the soles of his feet, wounded by the sharp and narrow nails, were healed by the grace of God. Yet this leader, who had less pity and compassion than a wild beast, instead of being converted by this miracle, increased his folly. He ordered the virtuous and diligent traveler to run again in the same shoes, in the same manner, over the same distance. The latter had spoken; the former did not hesitate at all but hastened to obey, saying: 'I will run now as before the altar of Christ. Not "iniquity," as the Psalmist says, but the justice of my heel will surround me. I would have been cowardly had I thought I walked on earth and not on the path that leads to heaven.'

After completing his course like Saint Paul and keeping his faith, he was beheaded. Such was the end of his combats. In a place called in the local language Resapha, he laid down the venerable dust of his body, which works thousands of miracles and cures; he sanctified the entire road leading there with the blood that flowed from his heels, and he blinded with the drops of this blood the shameless eye of the serpent that spies on our heel and whose head is watched. Therefore, when the demon sows perverse thoughts in our hearts, we must watch the beginnings like the head. He, for his part, spies on the heels, that is, the course of our thoughts unknown to him, through words or external works, so that in this way he may push us by the love of pleasure into the pit of sin and cause us to perish bitterly. This is why the inhabitants of the region, fleeing with energy and bravery the servitude of the demon, unharmed by him who spies on the heel, go to the revered and honored martyrion of Sergius and take upon themselves the yoke of the knowledge of God found in Christ. You see what the dishes of the feast for which you have retained me are, you of such rich friendship. Show then this feast in its fullness. Grant me your prayers, asking Christ the Almighty God to favor me with a good and pleasing return to the city of Antioch. To Him belong glory and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen!

## HOMILY 58 ON HIS ARRIVAL IN THE CITY OF CYR AND ON THE ECONOMY OF THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST OUR GOD. TABLE OF CONTENTS

An ancient custom dictates that those who come to the churches and can say something useful should appear in public and share with their listeners the wisdom and knowledge within them, if they happen to possess any. In this regard, even those still guided by the shadow of the Law of Moses had this concern. It is written, indeed, that when Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel and entered the synagogue of the Jews in Pisidian Antioch, the leaders of the synagogue sent some among them, saying: "Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, speak." We also see that Paul himself never approached men without addressing them or taking the trouble to instruct them, but he came to all in the same way, more through his word than through his bodily presence. This is what the divine Book shows us very clearly when it says of him: "Having arrived in Macedonia, he traveled through the places and addressed many exhortations to the disciples, then he went to Greece." He had so much care and solicitude for this manner of acting that he traveled through different places successively, exhorting and instructing the inhabitants individually, not negligently or in passing, but by addressing them with many words.

Therefore, as I too wish to observe this law and say something necessary and useful, I see (on one hand) that the one who leads this holy Church guides his flock with all spiritual and pastoral knowledge toward the good pasture, free from any germ of corruption, and makes it grow by tranquil waters, free from mud, but good to drink, pure, limpid, and clear; and I see (on the other hand) that the flock obeys the voice of its shepherd and follows him joyfully, without rebelling or fleeing as it would at a foreign voice. This is what especially moves me to speak, though I will say nothing absolutely new. For we will not preach to you another Jesus than the one this shepherd has preached, nor another Gospel than the one you have received. Because, like a wise architect, he has well laid the foundation, we cannot lay another foundation outside the one that has been laid, which is Christ! But it is upon this that we build suitably, placing gold, silver, and precious stones: the pure and unmixed doctrines of truth, and rejecting wood, hay, and straw: the deceitful and abominable inventions and the fictions of heresies. Knowing well what the

foundation is will teach us not to build upon it anything unusual or foreign. Let us therefore say what the foundation is. For it is with the heart that we believe in righteousness, and with the mouth that we confess salvation!

Christ, the wisdom and power of God, was born of the Father as the Word without suffering and without a body; yet He is without beginning, that is, independent of time, before all ages and from all eternity, as He is the radiance of His glory and the image of His own substance; as He is the Son of the same essence as His Father and as He is the only-begotten Son and the only one who comes from the only one, He possesses essentially and entirely all that belongs to the Father and remains Himself as an immutable image. The same descended from heaven in the last days, without a body, entered the womb of a virgin, was incarnate without sin, without human seed and without concupiscence, by the action of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin, and became flesh of the same essence as ours, animated by a rational soul. He did not change His divine nature, and truly and entirely He became man, without changing Himself into the soul or the flesh, and without mixing the soul or the flesh with the essence of divinity; for it is impossible for the divine to be mixed with the human. Thus, the soul of the foundation and of the man similar to us participated in blood and flesh, and, united in essence by an intimate union, it completed the man to make a single living being; it was not itself changed into the body, nor was the body changed into the soul; but each of these parts remained without confusion what it was, not isolated and separated so that they would be counted as two and, while united, still separated, but in such a way that by the combination of these two elements, a single person, a single hypostasis, and a single nature appear and subsist.

It is the same with the Word of God Himself; without seed and without sin, He participated in blood and flesh animated by a rational soul and was united in essence and nature without undergoing change or confusion, so that He is one of two, namely of the divinity and the humanity, which are whole and complete; thus, He is born Emmanuel and has been so designated. He showed "Mother of God" to the one who bore Him; for by the indwelling of the Spirit, she produced from herself the body capable of being conceived and born, and because of the ineffable union, she conceived and bore the Word who became incarnate. In a manner worthy of God, He was born, and by this wondrous birth, she was rightly called

"Mother of God," and it is by this miracle, and not by human grace or concession, that this appellation was attributed to her, proclaiming the great mystery that took place for us and the loving condescension of God the Word, which, even in humiliation, does not exclude the elevation above all men and worthy of God. For if this birth is ordinary, let the Virgin also be called "Mother of Man," O great in chatter and impiety, and if it is wondrous and ineffable, leave her this appellation, because it is wondrous and excellent. It is indeed known in advance that she bore God, not the one who does not incarnate, but the one who incarnates and becomes man. But, just as concerning our constitution, we know that the soul is united to the body in nature, without being able to say how and in what manner—for this surpasses our understanding—so, concerning Emmanuel, we know that the Word participated in blood and flesh in the same way as we do in nature and at the same time above nature; as for saying: How? This surpasses all words and thought. For by this single example borrowed from our life and which is ineffable, Paul showed the mystery that is even more ineffable and which no mind can grasp.

For if you ask: How? concerning the union, you must also ask it concerning the descent from heaven. How, in truth, did He descend from heaven to us, He who fills all things? Or how, without limiting Himself, did He come to be enclosed in the womb of the Virgin, He who cannot be enclosed? How was He wholly in all, or rather above all, and at the same time wholly in her? It is evident that this is above all words and all understanding, so that He alone knows it. For it is impossible to find the mode of these wondrous things, and it is fitting only for God to explain it, He whose power comes to the aid of all. That He descended, the Holy Scripture says indeed by the mouth of David: "Bow the heavens, O Lord, and come down." And this expression "Bow the heavens" means: "Do not continue," he says, "to be known only by the Virtues that are in the heights and in the heavens; but bow the heavens in some way and make them lean and unite them purposefully with the earth by annihilating and descending." For it is indeed the habit of the Holy Scriptures to often give the name of heaven to the Virtues that are in heaven: thus, Ezra also says: "Truth is great, and heaven blesses it."

Paul also makes us understand two things: He descended and was incarnate (taking) our own flesh. In his letter to the Galatians, he wrote: "When the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law." John,

the Theologian, the son of thunder, shows the indivisibility and at the same time the immutability of the incarnation, saying: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Paul, using again an example, depicted the fact, as far as man can, and made known that the Word was united to the flesh in essence, that is, hypostatically; for it is the same thing, because these two expressions indicate the essence and the union in nature. We have cited in what was said a little earlier his letter to the Hebrews: "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same." For it is false that the child preexisted in the womb of the Virgin and that He was the one who was created, who became a child in the flesh, who was conceived, and who was born. After a true and ineffable union of this kind, He is in no way divided; but from the divinity and the humanity, which, as we have said, remain entirely in their particular notion, He is one person, one hypostasis, and one nature, and it is clear that it is as the Word that He was incarnate.

I will cite to you again the law of Gregory the Theologian, so that you may learn that the interpreters of the mysteries and the doctors of the Church, following the traces of the Scripture inspired by God, recognized concerning Emmanuel the union in essence and in hypostasis. In his letter to Cledonius, he wrote these words: "If someone says that He acted by grace as in a prophet, and that He was not united and formed in essence, he will be deprived of the perfect operation, or rather he will be full of the opposite." And again: "If someone says that the man was created and that God then entered him subsequently, he will be condemned, for this is not the birth of God, but the denial of the birth." And again: "If someone does not confess Mary as 'Mother of God,' he is outside the divinity!" It follows from all this that when Theodoret, Nestorius, and the God-fighting crowd of those who gathered at Chalcedon, as well as their masters Diodore and Theodore, confessed that after the union there are two natures in the one Christ, they recognized not the true and hypostatic union, but the union inspired by love founded on merciful adherence and on grace—just as the master associates with his servant, as in the prophets, for example—which does not imply the birth of God who became incarnate, but rather excludes and denies the birth and does not truly grant that the Virgin was "Mother of God," although the councilor only pretended to admit the word to deceive and called Nestorius insane to mislead and flatter many, as the one who had been condemned by him once, and in reality as the one who displayed

dogmas similar to darkness and who became the cause of the anathema against their Fathers.

These words, indeed, the council of Chalcedon pretended to say in a perfidious manner. Explaining rather by fable and deceptive fiction, when it defined Christ in two natures, it said that His hypostasis is one, understanding "hypostasis" in place of "person," as the ruse was explained by Theodoret in his letter to John of Egea. For if there is truly one hypostasis, there will also be one incarnate nature of God the Word; or if there are two natures, there will also necessarily be two hypostases and two persons, and the Trinity will be found to be a quaternity. But these impious ones say: "We affirm two natures and one person, joining these two natures by naming Christ, the Son, and the Lord, and by power." This is absolutely as if someone considered one two men whom a king honors with the same honor, because of equality and identity of honor or power. Where has this invented and unusual mode of union been found? Let us rather say what is true: that the distinction is perfidious and deceitful and that it aims to make us approve what is not and to declare false what is truly so. For no one can say (the mode of union) relying on the divine Books: these affirm that the Word participated in blood and flesh in the same way as we and that He Himself became flesh, that is, man without change, remaining what He was; and not, on the contrary, that He communicated His own power to a man. For, in this hypothesis, it would not be He Himself who emptied Himself and voluntarily became man, when He became man without change and took the form of a servant; but another man, from the number of those who belong to the earth, would find himself seized by the divine power.

But if, when He participated in blood and flesh, He participated in the same manner as we, He emptied Himself, being rich by nature; and if, after He came under the measures of poverty, the latter is seen to be far removed, there is still a deceptive appearance of imagination. For it is not with a sort of celestial body, according to the expression of the fables of Valentinus, that the Word came among us, because it was not Adam who sinned and who was delivered to death and because it is also because of him that He accepted to incarnate. Nor did He pass for appearing as a man, as in dreams and in imaginations, according to the impiety of Eutyches and the Manicheans; for appearance was not enough for Him to raise the man who had fallen and lay under sin and to operate His true redemption. If His

intention was to have hallucinations and to imagine appearing only, it was not necessary for Him to take the Virgin to complete the economy, nor to be conceived for a space of nine months, nor to be wrapped in swaddling clothes, nor to pass through bodily growth and birth. But this presents no difficulty, for since He wished to be part of the race of Abraham, as it is written, to resemble us His brothers in all things except sin, and to pass through all our states, in order to entirely destroy the power of sin, He was incarnate of the Virgin descended from Adam, Abraham, and David, and voluntarily submitted to the laws of our nature, yet without seed and in an ineffable manner, in order to restore freedom to us, the slaves of sin. This is why He became flesh, (becoming) flesh of the same essence as ours, and not (a flesh) inanimate, but equally (a flesh) animated, and (animated) by a rational soul, for it would be strange for the Word to reject the rational soul created in His own image and to leave it without healing.

The senseless Apollinaris, indeed, did not trouble himself about our salvation and excluded our intelligence from the divine incarnation, because he is senseless and thinks that God cannot be united in an indivisible way to the flesh endowed with a rational soul. For the intelligent element is apparent to the Word and can be united in a much more suitable way than the flesh, without resulting from this addition any awkwardness, as is the case for horns, which grow by the greatness and difference of the body: how?

Paul explains the reason why the Word participated in the same things as us, saying: "That through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage." If the Word did not take one of the things by which death became powerful, the latter remained under the slavery of death: consequently, if the spirit was not taken, as the foolish Apollinaris thought, it did not recover freedom. But everything was taken, and it is by all this that the power of death was broken. Satan, who possessed it, when he fought with the man who was capable of suffering, found the same impassible God, who tasted death only in the flesh, but who, by His impassibility, blunted the bitter and sharp sting directed against us, by His life-giving burial destroyed corruption, by His descent into Sheol broke the ineluctable bonds of those who were confined there, and by His resurrection from the dead prepared the resurrection for us. This is the foundation of the doctrines,

shepherd of this spiritual flock; you have led your sheep to graze in your own pasture and not in a foreign one. You will place them before Him (the Lord) on the great and shining day of judgment, you will receive the reward of your administration by which you have driven away the wolves and shown to those you made graze to close their ears to the voice of the mercenaries, and you will hear the word of the sentence of the judge, (word) full of recognition, resembling a prayer and agreeable to those who await it: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master." To Him be glory in all times. Amen!

**HOMILY 59 THIS HOMILY WAS ALSO DELIVERED AT CAR, ON THE ECONOMY OF THE INCARNATION IN THE FLESH OF CHRIST OUR GOD, AGAINST THE BLASPHEMIES OF THEODORET.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Because we have seen that “the foundation which is Jesus Christ” has been well laid, if placed by the doctor and the wise “master-carpenter of this holy Church, that it was cast deep and consolidated, after your heart had been skillfully dug out and properly shaped with the doctrinal hoe of the dogmas (δάγματα) of piety, and that it is neither shaken by the Manichaean and atheistic imagination of Eutyches, nor undermined by the impure lack of understanding of Apollinaris, nor broken into two separate pieces by the Jewish madness of Nestorius concerning the duality of natures after the union, but that Christ, formed of two, namely divinity and humanity, which are complete according to their proper notion, without confusion and without division, is confessed as one Son (and one Lord according to the one person (πρόσωπον), the one hypostasis, and the one incarnate nature of the Word. For this reason, therefore, we too will continue to build carefully on this well-established foundation: for it is a cornerstone, chosen and of great value! It is a cornerstone because Christ united things that were distant, on the one hand when, by the body of His flesh and by the blood of His cross, as Paul says, He made peace and reconciliation between what is on earth and what is in the heavens, for we were exiled as in a war and odious to God because of sin, and on the other hand when by a single proclamation of the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον) He called those who belonged to Israel and those who belonged to the godless peoples bound by idolatry, and thus from both sides He made one and overthrew the intermediate wall of enmity: for the same is also called the mediator between men and God. And just as the property of the cornerstone is to be linked with both walls at once and to unite them together to make one thing, and similarly the property of the mediator is to be in relation with each of those who are separated and enemies; so also Christ Himself by nature is the Son and of the same essence (οὐσία) as the One who begot Him, and by His love He became without change of the same essence (οὐσία) as us, to raise us up with Himself and make us dwell with the heavenly Father, we who were separated and distant and lay dead because of sin.

How then could He who united the distant things and made them one, be Himself divided into two after the union? For what appears to come from two elements in one hypostasis does not at all confuse the elements from which it was united into one, nor does it become two again, for duality is the destruction of union. The same is called a chosen and precious stone because, as He is God, He is the only Son of the Father, who is beyond all created nature and is neither counted with the creatures nor numbered among them, and because He is the Lord of all honor and praise. Thus the bride of the Song of Songs, who prefigured the Church, also says of Him: “My brother's son is white and ruddy, chosen among thousands.” — “My brother's son”, because He participated in our nature when He became man without change, and because He was called the firstborn among many brethren. For we are also members of His body, part of His flesh and of His bones, as the Apostle wrote to the Ephesians. — The same is called white because of the brightness and the light, for “He is the true light that enlightens every man coming into the world”, as John the Theologian says. — The same, and not another, is also called ruddy because of the red color of the blood He shed voluntarily when He bore the cross for us in the flesh. — “Chosen among thousands among those who are born”, that is, He is not counted with the myriads of angels, but is chosen and stands far from them, because of the property and the true reality of His birth from His Father before the ages: for this reason the Sacred Book also used the word "birth" borrowed from corporeal things and called Him chosen among those who are born, to show that He was born of the essence (οὐσία) of the Father.

Such is also the word that seems to be addressed to the Son by the person (πρόσωπον) of God the Father through the Psalmist prophet: “I have begotten Thee from my bosom before the morning star.” For the word "bosom" is foreign to the incorporeal essence (οὐσία) and superior to all, but it indicates and signifies the true birth and like natural birth. The divine Book indeed uses the poverty of words in use among us, when it wants to elevate as much as possible the humility and the earthliness of our spirit to the height of divine thoughts and when it stoops for this reason to follow the habit of our ears, to paint in us the images (τύποι) of the truth and to advance our intelligence to the reason of its concerns by the sign of words, for it is impossible to show pure and simple actions in themselves otherwise than by different words and by very well-chosen expressions.

Christ is therefore the only one to be the stone; He is at the corner, He is chosen, He is precious, He is white and ruddy, according to the word of the bride of the Song of Songs; the Word indeed became flesh and dwelt among us, as John the Theologian and Evangelist (Εὐαγγελιστής) says, and although this does not please Theodoret who dared to cry out against the sacred Book of the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλιον) and say: "If therefore God the Word did not become flesh, it is in vain that we would take pretext of a change." For how indeed would God the Word who was in the beginning, who was with God and who was God, abandon what He was and change into what He was to become? For the preacher of truth gave us a preliminary warning when he often repeated this word "He was"; and, so to speak, he seemed to say: I speak to you of Him who is, do not let yourself go to a detestable opinion and do not think of a change concerning Him who is immutable, when you hear it said: He who is became flesh for us without changing what He was and taking in addition what He was not, and He became man in reality. Because the same was consequently perfect as God and as man, John also says: “That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have contemplated and which our hands have touched, concerning the Word of life.” He also said: “No one has ever seen God.” How then does He affirm that He has seen and touched the Word of life and living? Now it is certain that, in that He was incarnate and became man, He consented to become visible and tangible, since He was seen and touched not in what He was, but in what He became. Indeed, as He is one and indivisible, the same was both visible and invisible, and He was not subject to touch and yet was touched; the same spoke as God and as man; as befitted God (θεοπρεπῶς) He performed miracles, and according to what was recognized He endured sufferings. It is for no other reason that He became man than to bear suffering in our place and to say the words that we could not bear in the place of our race (γένος). For when He was without flesh, it was not possible for Him to suffer or to speak so humbly and humanly. But when He was incarnate by taking a body animated by an intelligent and capable soul of suffering, it is with reason that He spoke humanly and suffered in this body capable of suffering, while remaining Himself, as God the Word, incapable of suffering and impassible. For it is not because of the suffering of the divinity, which some impute to us out of ignorance, that we separate Him from the flesh; this is indeed the act of those who are frightened and shaken, who feel fear where there is no fear, who fall into the accusations they bring against

others, who tremble as if it were a question of a passible God and who remove Him from suffering, separating Him from the flesh to which He was united. For we are persuaded that, when He was incarnate, He was also united with death by the flesh—it was not possible otherwise—and that He endured none of the sufferings of which He was incapable. But He became Himself the suffering of sufferings and the death of death, because He could neither rise above the flesh nor approach completely the impassible, but even in the resurrection He became Himself dead and did not take either the impassible, but remained as He was, God the Word, impassible, and it is thus that He conquered with power the one who thought he had seized Him.

This belonged not to fear, but to economy and our instruction, the word He said: “My soul is sorrowful unto death.” (Text blurred) On the other hand, He also tamed the insolent audacity of the Jews who would have gone so far as to say: We are not guilty of having crucified Him who voluntarily came to suffering. Thirdly, by these words He gave us a lesson to ourselves, to know not to run to fights (ἀγών) for piety without being called, not to go there recklessly by ourselves and not to put our trust in ourselves; but, when the occasion arises, to lift our eyes to God and say: “Let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” That this was said for our instruction is, in fact, quite certain, since the will of the Son and of the Father is not different, but there is one and the same will.

Moreover, by these words He also showed that He participated in the same nature as us, He who was enslaved by death and who voluntarily endured the suffering of fear and anguish, saying: “My soul is sorrowful unto death”, so that these sorrows which had entered into struggle with Christ might be radically torn from our race (γένος). Indeed, just as when He voluntarily bore death in the flesh, He planted immortality by it, so when He voluntarily endured the suffering of fear, He sowed by it the strength and courage with which He arms for the great fights (ἀγών) of martyrdom those who have believed in Him. That is why it is also for us that He uttered on the cross the cry: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” when He took upon Himself the defense (συνήγορον) of our whole race (γένος); for it is we who were abandoned because of Adam's disobedience, our first father. For it is not He Himself who was abandoned, He foretold it to His disciples when He approached the salutary suffering: “Behold, the hour is coming when you will

be scattered, each to his own, and you will leave me alone; but I am not alone, for the Father is with me." Therefore it was not He who was abandoned, but He uttered this cry for us who were abandoned, of whom He also spoke by the prophet David, saying in advance the same words: "My God, my God, attend to me: why hast Thou forsaken me?" The words of my sins are far from my salvation. For it was not for His own sins that He prayed, He who committed no sin and in whose mouth no deceit was found. The Apostle called this cry a loud cry with which He accompanied His prayer as with tears, because He borrowed from us the tears as well as the voice; for great was in reality the cry which was able, during all this time, to incline towards us the ears of the Father which the disobedience of Adam had turned away. For how was He to need a loud cry, when the Son prayed for Himself, whereas the publican and the adulterous woman groaned, wept in silence and were heard? That it is because of the economy that He prayed, and not because He needed it Himself, He made it known when He prayed for Lazarus: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me; for I knew that Thou hearest me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me." Just as He appropriated our sins, though He knew no sin, so He also called our salvation His own salvation and said, though He was Himself the Savior: "The words of my sins are far from my salvation." That is why He cried to Him who could save Him from death and was heard because of His piety. Although He asked to be saved from death Himself, He was not heard absolutely, for He died; but when we awaken and if we understand (well), He was heard when He prayed that we might be saved and delivered by Him from the curse of death pronounced against Adam, which He destroyed by His own death. Just as He borrowed from us prayer and tears, so He also borrowed from us piety and made it a point to learn obedience by the things He suffered. For it was not Himself who needed to learn, He who knows all; but as He willed to be the firstfruits of our race (γένος), He supplied for the lacks and defects of Adam. That is why it is also said that He was perfected, He who is perfect in all His nature, when, having become man, He appropriated our imperfection and gave us a doctrinal model (τύπος) and that He is the author of eternal salvation for all who obey Him.

How then does Theodoret, blushing at these things which are thus worthy of God and at the same time conformable to the economy, dare to say that God the Word, who because of these things voluntarily emptied Himself and humbled Himself?

For if He removes Him from these things as vile and small, how will He learn that He humbled Himself; but, not understanding the wisdom of the divine incarnation and giving these things separately and apart to the human nature, He divides the one Christ into two and asks: "Who is He who was perfected by the labors of virtue and was not perfect by nature? Who is He who learned obedience by trial and did not know it before the trial? Who is He who lived piously, who presented His prayers with tears and could not save Himself, but prayed to Him who could save Him?" If you say and think that Christ is one, how do you pose these questions using this word "Who is He...?" as if it were a question of two persons (πρόσωπον), so that you apply these things to the man separately and not to God the Word incarnate and made man? For us, while knowing that He is one, recognizing the distinction and confessing that among the words and among the actions some are worthy of God and others are human, we attribute them all to Him, without forgetting that the same is God and man, and we do not separate or divide them between the two natures. For this is what Paul also indicated when he said: “Who in the days of His flesh presented prayers and supplications” (by this) He knows, without the flesh, before He became man, He who took upon Himself these vile and human things; and he added: “Although He was the Son.” (by this) He marveled at all this humiliation accepted for us as the humiliation of the Son of God by nature. We offer Him praise as well as to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, now, always, and throughout all ages. So be it!

**HOMILY 60 THIS HOMILY WAS DELIVERED WHEN THE CHRISTIANS OF CARLUI LOUDLY DEMANDED ANOTHER INSTRUCTION FROM HIM, ASKING HIM TO EXTEND HIS TEACHING FURTHER.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

It seems to me that, given the measure of our weak strength and considering that we came to your city only for a visit, we have sufficiently spoken to you about the dogmas (δόγματα) of the truth. But, driven by your fervor and inspired by the love of God, you deemed it appropriate to detain us at the very moment we were preparing to depart. While you held us back with the bond of love to hear this third homily, we recalled an ancient story. Elijah the Tishbite, who was inflamed with zeal for God and said, “I have been very zealous for the Lord,” and who could not bear the alteration of the worship of God that shameful prophets, as the divine Book says, had transferred to Baal and to abominable false gods, cried out to both them and the people they had deceived: “How long will you limp between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” Wishing to reprove their ignorance perfectly and, since there was no hope of their conversion, to deliver them to destruction by a decision from on high, he presented the following proposition to the people and said to these impious men: “Let two bulls be given to us.” When the people responded and said, “The proposal you have made is good,” he permitted the false prophets to offer their holocaust first; it was fitting that the weakness of falsehood be first exposed and then that the truth demonstrate its invincible force. These men cried until midday, saying, “Answer us, Baal, answer us,” but no voice or sound was heard. Thus, as their lack of response made it evident that there was absolutely no fire and that the holocaust remained untouched, Elijah mocked the vanity of their understanding: “Cry louder,” he said, “perhaps your god is asleep and needs to be awakened.” When these men had clearly shown the weakness and falsity of their deceit, the man of God took his turn. He built an altar with twelve stones and dug a trench around it. Then, after cutting the bull into pieces and placing it on the altar with the wood, he gave this order to those near him: “Take four jars of water and pour it on the altar, the holocaust, and the wood.” He told them, “Do this a second time,” and they did so a second time. He added, “Do this a third time,” and they did it a third time. They filled the trench around the altar with water, making it like a sea. The prophet cried out in a loud voice to the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; he

invoked and implored the ancestors of the people and their patrons, saying that they should have pity on their children who were in error. As these words resounded loudly from his spirit and mouth, fire was sent from heaven in response to his words. It descended upon the altar and consumed everything at once—the holocaust, the wood, the stones, and even the water that flooded the surroundings—so thoroughly that it seemed to lick up the dust. The people fell to their knees and cried out, "Truly, the Lord is God; it is He who is God." And rising up, they killed the false prophets.

We, too, have spoken freely (παρρησία) to those who behave hypocritically (σχῆμα), first confessing one Christ and then dividing Him into two by the duality of natures after the union. We have said to them: "How long will you limp between two opinions? If Christ is one, confess the incarnate nature of the Word; but if after the union you proclaim two natures, do not pretend (σχῆμα) to say with your tongue what you have violently split in two." Yet these men, like the prophets of Baal, implore help from false knowledge, sometimes citing the refusal of the cup, sometimes the words, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" and the prayer offered for us with loud cries and tears, along with everything else done and said according to the economy. But to them, as to those before, there was no response—no true voice or sound. But we have erected the altar of true knowledge on the twelve unshakable stones of the doctrine of the twelve apostles. We have prepared the spiritual holocaust with the subtlety of dogmas (δόγματα) and have cut it into pieces. We have done this only twice, speaking to you these two days, but you wish us to imitate Elijah completely, and you have given us the occasion to do so a third time. Behold, we joyfully do so for the third time, addressing this third homily to you. Thus, Christ, the heavenly, immaterial, uncreated fire—for our God is a consuming fire, as it is written—will shine in your hearts, consuming all that is earthly, human, and combustible, and He will accept the entire holocaust as a pleasing offering, making it His own nourishment. For He Himself said: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me," and the Father's will is our salvation, accomplished by the coming of Christ in the flesh. How, indeed, could Christ not be the fire? When He was still living under the measure of voluntary humiliation and working for our economy, He was transfigured on the mountain. On that occasion, He did not act merely in appearance (φαντασία), nor did He change what He was—for let us banish all change and pretense—but His face shone like the sun

with divine splendor, and His garments became white as light. For He Himself is the sun of righteousness. “He covers Himself with light as with a garment and spreads out the heavens like a tent,” as David says in the Psalms. And at His crucifixion, He halted the very rays of the sun. But the impious, diminishing the greatness of this divine miracle, say there was nothing remarkable about it.

Theodore, the former bishop of Mopsuestia and teacher of Nestorius and Theodoret, said, “There was nothing great here, for when the Egyptians were struck by Moses, there was darkness—not for three hours, but for three days.” I say to him, rightly and justly, “Are you not ashamed, O vain one, not to understand what you are saying?” In the first case, the darkness occurred only in Egypt, but in the second, it covered the whole earth. For He who endured the salutary death of the cross in the flesh is the Master of all the earth and all creation. What is astonishing if, as a figure (τύπος) through Joshua the son of Nun, He prolonged the light of the sun for the length of a day? For He commanded the luminaries in the heavens, saying, “Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, in the valley of Aijalon,” for this sole reason: He prefigured the heavenly and divine Jesus. That He prefigured Him is indeed evident. When Moses was about to send him out of the wilderness, along with other men chosen from each tribe of Israel, to explore the Promised Land, he was called Hoshea at the time, but Moses changed his name to Joshua, whereas he did not change the name of any other. Joshua, by God’s decree, became the leader of the people after Moses’ death and apportioned the Promised Land by lot as an inheritance. For no other name, whatever it might be, was given to enter the land that was considered a figure (τύπος) of the kingdom of heaven, except the name of Jesus. Peter testifies: “There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Jesus Himself proclaims in the Gospels: “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, will go in and out, and find pasture.”

As for the darkness that occurred during the crucifixion, even the authors of secular histories noted it, for it happened outside of any ordinary or determined solar eclipse, and they bear witness, as does the earth that trembled, that in this miracle the creature suffered alongside the Creator. The prophet Amos, observing the hours precisely, also prophesied that there would be darkness “from the sixth

hour until the ninth hour," saying, "And it shall come to pass in that day, says the Lord God, that the sun shall go down at noon, and the light shall grow dark on the day of feasting." Have you not been enlightened in your spirits, seeing Him who was humbled in humiliation, shining in suffering with divine wonders? Do you not adore Him with your faces to the ground, saying, "Truly, He is the Lord God, the one who was crucified for us; it is He who is God"?" Do you not turn away your faces, like lying prophets, from those who divide Him and say that after the union He exists in two natures? Do you not abhor them because they alter and change the faith with deceitful sophistry? It is true, and you have shown it in deed when you have anathematized those who profess these opinions.

In response to your truth and orthodoxy, God has again raised up and established over you this holy elder, the excellent pastor of your metropolis. He has come to you with the fullness of the blessing of Christ, and like Jacob, who was old and full of days spent in divine virtues, he can bestow upon his own children true and effective blessings. If time and illness had not weakened him, he might have risen upon hearing my words and hurled the darts of his own tongue against the inventions of the heretics (αἱρετικοί). For he is still filled with zeal for the Lord, and in this alone he has not grown old but has preserved in his spirit the ardor of repentance and youth. We have addressed you again today out of love for you, and we have done so for the third time in honor of the Holy Trinity. But you will not quench the fire of the orthodox dogmas (δόγματα) of the faith, so that you may enter the kingdom of heaven with lamps lit. May we all obtain this by the grace and love of Jesus Christ, our great God and Savior. To Him be praise, honor, and power, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

**HOMILY 61 THE SERMON UPON RETURNING AFTER VISITING THE HOLY MONASTERIES. (THIS HOMI-LY) WAS DELIVERED ON THE DAY OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY FORERUNNER JOHN THE BAPTIST.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Moses, the minister of the divine Law (vigoz), held such an exceptional place among the prophets that the Sacred Book says of him: "There has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." He was (thus) above all the leaders of peoples, because he did not possess authority by inheritance through his descent from others, nor by the decision and election of those who held power, but by a divine command from above: to this he was brought back when he fled and when he resisted and trembled before the greatness of this charge; for virtue manifests itself and constantly withdraws into humility. After leaving the people he led, he ascended with his feet to the summit of Mount Horeb, but in spirit, he reached heaven—or rather (πάντων ζῶν), the Lord of heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible. In his hands, he received the text of the divine Law (νόμος), but in his soul, he was initiated into its depth and spirit. Concerning the Tabernacle of the Testimony, which he was to build as a prefiguration of Christ's Church, he was told: "See that you make everything according to the pattern (τύπος) shown to you on the mountain." After being nourished solely by divine contemplation (θεωρία) and tasting neither bread nor water for forty days, he descended carrying the tablets of the Law—stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. As he neared the camp, he heard a clamor reaching his ears. The cause was that the people were deeply intoxicated and raving, for not only wine but idolatry had driven them to madness. They had "exchanged their glory," as the Scripture says, transferring their worship to a molten calf the worship due to God. Joshua, son of Nun, who was present with him, said in ignorance: "There is a noise of war in the camp!" But Moses, who had already foreseen the people's rebellion and was grieved in spirit, replied: "It is not the sound of victory, nor the cry of defeat—what I hear is the noise of drunken revelry." These words were soon confirmed by the sight of the calf, and what was heard was verified by what was seen: the dancing, the laughter, the demonic frenzy, and all the other effects of drunkenness.

At this sight, he did not tear his hair, nor rend his garments, nor throw dust upon his head—for his anguish was far deeper than mere grief. Instead, he shattered the tablets, which were already bearers of the external, superficial, and letter-bound legislation (νόμος), yet also pregnant with the far deeper spiritual Law (νόμος). For in the face of such corruption, sound, true, and divine thoughts are inevitably shattered and refuse to dwell in weak, disordered, and impure hearts.

I too, despite my unworthiness, have ascended the mountain of philosophy "θεωρητική" (contemplative), when I went these days to visit those who live a higher life, akin to mountaintop dwellers, in the monastic state. I saw not a bush burning with fire, but men ignited by the divine fire of the greatest and loftiest desires, ascending toward heaven. They do not receive the Law ("νόμος") on stone tablets but bear the laws ("νόμοι") of the Spirit written on the tablets of their hearts. Not only do they meditate on them day and night and speak of them, but they fulfill them in deed, becoming themselves a living law ("νόμος") for those who observe them—a law that orders conduct toward the future life, scorns temporal goods, turns away from the corruption of this world, and cries out to all, as Christ said to His apostles: "Let us depart from this place." Indeed, they resemble angels even in this world, foreshadowing the impassibility and joy of the resurrection and tasting in advance the (blessings) we await. For they have renounced the union of man and woman, the very means of procreation, yet "they have shouted and multiplied." We hear our Savior say: "In the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." Nor is this their only resemblance to the celestial powers. They also emulate them through unceasing choirs of praise, honoring their Lord with hymns free from all sorrow and suffering, delighting and uplifting their souls. With frequent genuflections, they offer worship to Him "before whom every knee shall bow—in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." They conclude their songs with tears of prayer, washing away the leprosy of souls weakened and aged by sin, only to begin anew with even greater purity. When their hymns cease, they turn to divine Scripture, gathering the fruits and flowers of Paradise. Though their bodies dwell on earth, their spirits abide in heaven. They care for food only as necessity demands, knowing their bond to the flesh; at sunset, they partake solely of what sustains the body—bread, water, and simple herbs—finding solace in austerity.

Here there is no jealousy, for all equally pursue self-denial. The scheming against one another, false accusations, and lawsuits ("πραγμάτων") have vanished. Avarice—"the root of all evils"—is absent among them. Instead, they cherish spiritual riches and zealously cultivate virtue. They quell anger, restrain their speech, and temper unrestrained laughter with the gravity of repentance. They keep ever mindful of the unending sorrow threatened for sin. Like a body with perfectly ordered members, they rejoice in one another's progress as their own. Among them, equality extends even to their garments—thick enough to conceal and warm, yet subduing the flesh's rebellious impulses. Thus, all tumult is banished; tranquility and silence reign throughout. Rightly might their way of life be called "the fulfillment of the mysteries." They truly live the life of this world—yet will live even more fully the life to come.

Therefore, I wept also for myself, for I have been deprived of such blessed dwelling. And so I descended into this valley of tears, into the abyss ("βυθός") of the world below—a world that drags downward the intellect, which was made for higher things and yearns upward, ensnaring it in tears and sighs over vain cares. While in this state, I spoke to my soul the words of Peter: "Shall we build tents here?" And I saw it eagerly agree. But then, remembering your love, and the marriage covenant by which Christ has united me to this Church, my soul rebuked me with these words: "Put this thought aside. You are bound to a wife—do not seek to break this bond. We were bought at a great price ("τιμή"), the blood of Christ, and we are not masters of our own souls. Let it not be our will, but the Lord's, that is done." Thus, I turned my gaze from the summit of that mountain—the exalted, heaven-ascending life of these monks. Let no one, pointing to false monks, defame this divine way of life. For even Judas sinned among the apostles did not discredit the others—I resolved to descend. Having fixed my spirit upon the image of this holy Church and set aside that lofty philosophy ("θεωρία"), I surrendered wholly to her, ready even to shed my blood if need be.

For just as a woman adorned with great wealth, noble birth, radiant beauty, and the seal of chastity might be betrothed to a poor wretch who owns nothing but his humble faith, so too has this Church acted toward me. Though I am poor, lacking all perfection, and possess only the orthodox preaching of the faith, she has united

me to herself, brought me into her mystical chamber, and valued this alone above all riches. Thus, she cherishes me when present and longs for me when absent. She herself was the first of all holy Churches founded across the earth. To her was spoken: “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. She was the first to receive the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, entrusted to her as a shepherd, a spouse, and a builder. She followed him as a shepherd, dwelt with him as a chaste spouse—shaping her conduct after his—and safeguarded in her treasury the foundation he laid as a builder. She is clothed with the esteem of Christians (“χριστιανισμός”) above all other bonds, as with royal and purple robes (“πορφύρα”). Her zeal burns brightest in this: she tolerates no distortion of the word of truth and cannot endure those who traffic (“καπηλεύω”) in divine things. Those who approached her unworthily, dwelling with her long yet unrepentant in their impiety, she cast out with a decree of reproach (“ἀποπομπή”), justly rejecting them, refusing to share a dwelling. Yet she is not like “the quarrelsome wife who loves strife, harbors grudges, and cannot bear the tolerable faults of her husband"—a trait even strong and honorable women—but (she took this measure only) when all hope was lost, for they were beyond healing and sought to corrupt her faith, spreading their ruin like a pestilence.

Thus, I am not only humbled by her choice but filled with awe and trembling. Like a gentle, unworthy husband who, to earn his noble wife’s love, offers nothing but the purity of his conduct, so too I deliver to this Church the word of faith with orthodox clarity—undimmed and unalloyed. As with a scale that must balance perfectly, I fear lest one side grow too light: By the “phantasia” (φαντασία)” without substance, the ghostly heresy of Eutyches, denying Christ’s true humanity, or by the blindness of Apollinaris, excluding the “nous” (νοῦς)—the highest faculty—from the divine incarnation and our redemption. Or worse, lest it grow too heavy: by dividing the “united natures” after the ineffable union, dragging the mystery earthward. But I preach to this Church that Jesus is one: the same “yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8);  He stands at the end of ages and before all time; through Him all things were made. The same suffered in the flesh, yet as God, He remains beyond suffering. For He is “one” from two—divinity and humanity—each nature preserving its integrity according to its proper character. The same is true God and true man, known in “one hypostasis” (ὑπόστασις).  One

is the “person” (πρόσωπον), and one is the incarnate nature of the Word. When contemplating the elements of His union, we do not assert two divided natures; nor—because He is “consubstantial” (ὁμοούσιος) with us (yet without sin or change)—do we deny He is “consubstantial” (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father. From Christ, let us banish as impious plagues: “division, confusion, and illusion”—opposed yet alike in their destruction of salvation. For this, the glorious mother of Churches burns with love for me: when I am naked, she clothes me in her own garments and makes me appear rich. She grieves when I depart and chides me when I delay. As for me, even in my absence, I have not forgotten her.

When I dwelt atop that mountain with those who live the higher life of monasticism, I discovered she was “‘graven on the palms of the Lord’” (Isaiah 49:16)—as Isaiah says of Jerusalem—and that her memory arose constantly in their prayers and supplications. After descending, I visited her most renowned daughters—the Churches under her care—and reminded them of their noble maternal lineage and the orthodox doctrines (“δόγματα”) of the faith. They came to realize that their apostolic roots, maternal nobility, pure upbringing, and sound instruction compelled them to reject all adulterous and foreign influences, cherishing instead their natural beauty by spurning heretical seductions (“αἵρεσις”) as one would scorn fading, painted colors. As I journeyed from those places and approached the city gates, or rather, the “γαζοφυλάκιον” (treasury) for I was still far from the city, a voice came forth to meet me. It was not the voice that struck Moses’ ears—the voice of drunkenness, mocking laughter, and lewd demonic dances that shatter the tablets of the Law (“νόμος”) and provoke God’s wrath. Rather, it was the voice of “‘gladness and thanksgiving’” (Psalm 42:4), as David says, bursting with the solemn cries of a spiritual feast, opening the tablets of the heart to eagerly receive God’s highest and loftiest laws (“νόμοι”). Yet I will inscribe upon you accessible laws—light to bear and free from burden.

Monastics pursue poverty and nakedness; let us pursue this: to do no harm, to covet nothing of others, and to share with the needy as we are able. Monastics sing fervently night and day; let us pledge this: to keep our tongues and ears from foolish songs, opening our mouths (or ears) to the Church’s hymns—be it at vespers or matins. Monastics guard perfect silence, restraining their tongues so that they are trained in moderation for both hearing and speaking; let us banish

slander—that irrational poison of bitterness. They are bound by love (“ἀγάπη”);  let us cease mutual treachery. They weep to cleanse their souls from sin; let us forbid ourselves the race toward theaters (“θεάτρων”). For we seek the same Kingdom of Heaven as they; our conduct must mirror theirs, neither alien nor divergent— for “‘what fellowship has light with darkness?’” (2 Corinthians 6:14), as Scripture declares. While I bring you these laws (“νόμοι”), “John” preaches through me today—that “‘voice crying in the wilderness’” (Matthew 3:3), who reclaimed souls barren of perfection, flung wide the gates of repentance, and first proclaimed the Kingdom of Heaven. By his prayers, he has granted us this surpassing grace: that I see you again and embrace you in spirit on his feast day. For he delights to “precede”—not only in time but in the beauty of his deeds—proving by action that he is the Forerunner who races ahead of every good. Let us therefore implore him to “go before us” also into the Kingdom of Heaven—which he prepared through his prophetic preaching—that he may extend his hand and aid us on this narrow path. For we are like children, unsteady in walking due to the imperfection of our virtues, not yet attaining “‘to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ’” (Ephesians 4:13).  May he who declared, “‘Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect’” (Matthew 5:48), grant us too this perfection. To him belongs glory unto all ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 62 ON THE CRYSTALS THAT WERE SENT FROM PALESTINE, AND ON THE COALS WHICH WERE VOMITED BY THE POSSESSED, AND WHICH WERE SHOWN TO THE HOLY CHURCH OF GOD OF ANTIOCH. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Jerusalem was once on the brink of being attacked by the Babylonians and being delivered to complete defeat and devastation; it was assailed by the warnings of the prophets, but it did not convert; it was not moved by these threats but remained without doubt; it did not turn away from sin but remained occupied with the same senseless words and actions. Jeremiah, whose heart was broken with divine sorrow—for there was no one else who showed greater pity and more palpable mercy toward his compatriots—seeing that the impending misfortune was near and had already arrived, and being utterly unable to make anyone understand his laments, wept and said: "Who will have pity on you, Jerusalem, or who will grieve for you?" He sought indeed for laments and tears capable of stopping God's wrath—not those that merely wet the eyes and perhaps even flow down the cheeks, but those that come from the depths, as if from the soul itself, and bring about a change in the blameworthy conduct of life. For praiseworthy are the tears that bear fruit and can sway God. Likewise, those that are ineffective and contradicted by actions, possessing no strength, can even provoke anger because they are shed under the guise of hypocrisy. Is it not hypocrisy to weep a little over sin and yet continue to be entangled in its works? Therefore, the prophet Isaiah not only condemns such tears but also speaks these very important words: "I do not notice whether you bow your neck like a hook, or spread sackcloth and ashes beneath you, or prepare a fast and a day pleasing to the Lord." Micah also speaks in the same spirit: "In the assembly of the Lord, do not raise deceitful cries, for the Lord will not listen." Joel cries out vehemently in the same vein: "Now, therefore," says the Lord, "turn to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. Rend your hearts and not your garments." For a heart that is contrite and broken, serving the Lord with fear or with love after fear, doing good for the sake of goodness itself and walking in all obedience, is needed to appease the wrath from on high and to make God merciful. That is why, when I once learned of the calamity, sudden and unprecedented, that had befallen the great city of Alexandria, I came forward in public and, after ascending this holy chair, described the nature of this scourge with words; I set these misfortunes before your eyes, I read to the

assembly the terrible threats contained in the God-inspired Book against transgressors of divine laws, I gave warnings, I showed what needed to be done. You were struck with astonishment upon hearing this account, you accepted the pity I showed you, you repaid my words with tears, you groaned, you restrained yourselves, you gathered to make prayers before the gates of the city, you took God into the church with hymns and songs, you turned away from the pleasures of spectacles, as from something that causes the loss of the soul, and from all the softness and lust of desire, you applied yourselves and prepared for purity and gentleness in view of zealous works and the rest of an honest life.

But now, I see that you have forgotten all this to such an extent that you no longer know if you ever heard anything frightening and terrible. What then was I to do? For I learn that the calamity, which is not believed before its trial, advances silently, comes, already strikes cities and other places, and it is expected that it will come upon us without much delay, so that soon it will not be spoken of but seen. Should I not remind you again of repentance and return with the same words? But I greatly feared that, by saying the same things, we might not only fail to inspire any fear in you but also appear ridiculous to some as superfluous and talkative. Therefore, I read to you the letters written from Palestine, which are the work of holy and very pious men, who breathe truth as if it were air and are worthy of belief; I placed before you as proof the extinguished coals they sent us with the letters, which they saw with their own eyes and received in their own hands after they were vomited by the possessed—along with the sharp fragments of broken glass that were vomited at the same time as the coals. You also heard that those who wrote added that they had learned some of the possessed brought forth nails from the depths of their entrails and spat them out through their mouths. Shall we then let these things pass without sorrow and tears? Are they not capable of softening even a heart of stone, of turning us away from all irrational desire and pleasure, and of persuading us to force ourselves to live and sit on sackcloth, to be in cruel sorrow and pain, and to say with the prophet Psalmist: "I have eaten ashes like bread and mingled my drink with tears"? Are these not the beginnings of future and endless torment? Who will hesitate and still not believe in the unquenchable flame with which we are threatened, seeing men rolling on the ground, tormented and tortured by pains, crying out that they are consumed by a secret and hidden fire, yet attested by the vomiting and expulsion of extinguished

coals? When you answer me by asking: "How, after the resurrection of the bodies, can someone burn endlessly without being consumed, even as they burn?" let these visible things be for you, O man, the proof of future things.

For we must also believe the certain words of the Gospel as we believe the facts, especially when our Savior cries out: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away!" Yet concerning all these things, we hesitate and do not believe, merely saying with our lips that we believe and not thinking at all that it is true. Therefore, even when we hear these words, which are still spoken by our Lord and which indicate another kind of torment prepared for sinners—when He says: "If that wicked servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces"—we hesitate and do not believe, and, laughing, we either say or think: "Will someone still die after the resurrection, even while being divided? What kind of division is this?" This seems unbelievable and even impossible, but it presents itself so that we may say to those in such dispositions: "Look, O worldly wise one, at the shards of glass vomited through a delicate member—the throat; they cause the pain of a wound but pass without tearing or bruising, because they make no cut or division in the body. Let the clarity and fragility of the glass be for you a figure of some spiritual and intellectual knife, which does not cut or divide the body but strips away, as if it were skin, the spiritual adoption once obtained through Baptism by those condemned to this punishment. These visible things are a reproach to our unbelief, my brothers. Therefore, even this—that shards of glass are vomited and expelled through the throat—belongs to faith and must not be regarded as irrational. For it is proof that we have despised the fear of God, the words of divine correction, and repentance. David testifies to this, saying: "Pierce—that is, restrain—my flesh with fear, for I have feared Your judgments." The Ecclesiastes says likewise: "The words of the wise are like goads and like nails firmly fixed." He very rightly called them "goads," because they spur us to work like oxen plowing the earth. The phrase "like nails firmly fixed" is equally worthy of admiration: for the fear of God, the instructive words of virtue, and the doctrines are driven violently into us because we have been seized by wickedness and from our youth are eagerly inclined to evil. But once they are fully driven in—because our nature has an

affinity for good, like very fertile soil—they are surrounded and enveloped by the driving of the nails, as if by the roots of a plant, and they change anew those who had been changed by wickedness. Thus, we also vomit out with violence and pain nails of this kind.

That is why even infants have endured this suffering, so that we may learn that it is by our fault that we have corrupted nature, and that henceforth it does not willingly incline toward virtue. The vomiting of coals clearly indicates that those who come into the world become children of Gehenna and fire when we do not teach them the knowledge pertaining to the kingdom of God. For who ever speaks to his own child about the resurrection, or the kingdom of heaven, or the future and eternal life? We do not shrink at all from the labor of teaching children Scripture; and likewise, when they grow up, we show them the iniquity committed in commercial exchanges, the motives for fraud, the profits and advances of dishonest practices and gains, jealousy toward neighbors, hatred of men, and the proud constructions of magnificent buildings. Do we not, by the very facts, advise them not to believe the Apostle who said: "For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the one to come"? Have we read to them a spiritual law? Have we taught them a small commandment of Scripture? Have we shown them how, through care for the poor, hospitality to strangers, aid to the afflicted, and other good works, we build eternal dwellings? I pass over the softness and depravity in which we raise children, making evil desires and all impurity easy for them. Because of all these things, which have now grown and strengthened, even the age of childhood is largely affected by this astonishing calamity; it instructs our insensitivity without causing us pain, and it itself is not at all inconvenienced. Thus, even the children killed in Bethlehem by Herod suffered no harm from the murder, which quickly transferred them from this miserable and temporal life to the kingdom of heaven; for, in place of all the pains and sorrows that occur here—unless they occur because of the penalty of sins—they served as payments in the future life for those who endured the same trials. Here too, this is observed by each as it should be. Why then, we who hear of these misfortunes and see them now hanging over our heads, should we still be preoccupied with sin, walk the same paths of perdition, and not imitate the little children? For when parents want to keep their children away from harmful things, they give them proper warnings with words and say: "Be careful, do not go near the well, lest you fall in; do not climb to the upper room or the roof to look,

lest you fall headfirst and die." If they see them disobeying, running toward the same things, despising their command, and not being stopped by this warning, they then set up in these places terrifying figures and images of wild beasts capable of frightening and terrifying them; and after leading them there, they show them and inspire fear with some threat, saying: "Do not continue to tread these places; otherwise, you will be devoured by these beings you see." Seized with fear and terror, the children restrain their spirits and push away the harmful habit.

Today, therefore, we too—allow me to speak freely, for it concerns your salvation—have approached you as children. For in the past, when we spoke to you as men, we showed you misfortunes with words. But now, seeing you still going to spectacles, disorder, and the softness that follows, to the loss and corruption of the soul, we have shown you, as children, not deceptive figures, artificially made to teach a fear that does not exist, but the very fruits of wrath, to frighten by sight those whom words did not restrain. Thus did God also approach, through the prophets, the children of Israel, who were in a childish and very imperfect state. For as He frequently threatened them with the destruction of Jerusalem, they did not listen. Then He frightened them, like very small children, with the terrifying sight of the facts themselves, which prefigured the threat. He said to Jeremiah: "Go and buy an earthenware jar, gather some of the elders of the people and of the priests, go out to the valley of the Son of Hinnom, and break the jar in the presence of the men who accompany you, and say to them: 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, so that it can never be mended. Thus will I do to this place and its inhabitants, making this city like Topheth.'" He also commanded Ezekiel to rebuke, with similar figures and the very example of facts, the bestial and irrational life of the people, their mixed ceremonies, their conduct, the captivity awaiting them because of this, the hunger they would suffer there, and the unclean and unlawful foods they would eat: "Take wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt," He said, "put them in a vessel, and make bread for yourself. The food you eat shall be twenty shekels a day; eat it at fixed times. Drink water by measure, one-sixth of a hin; drink it at fixed times. Eat barley cakes, baking them with human dung before their eyes. Say: 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: So shall the people of Israel eat their bread unclean among the nations where I will drive them.'" But the prophet Isaiah himself—though he prophesied more clearly and manifestly than the others—was not exempt from this

mode of warning. For he was commanded to walk naked and barefoot to show the nakedness and harsh captivity of his compatriots. These things happened for no other reason than that the hearers, who were coarse in spirit, childish, and not corrected by words, might be moved by the sight of the facts and restrained by fear and necessity.

Let us also be fearful, we who have seen not figures of the misfortunes to come but the very signs of wrath. Let no one look at his neighbor and imagine that he himself will be saved by those who are pleasing to God. Let each consider that it is because of him that wrath will come, if he does not turn again to good. For if we do not look to ourselves but place our hopes in others, we will all remain empty-handed, with absolutely no resource for salvation, and the words of Jeremiah will rightly apply to us: "Run through the streets of Jerusalem, look and take note! Search her squares to see if you can find a man, one who does justice and seeks truth, that I may pardon her." See the greatness of His charity; to this one man He wishes to grant the salvation of all, and He does not find him. For there are indeed cases where the virtue and perfect justice of one man abundantly procure the salvation of an entire city. But this supreme good—a man who can stop wrath and be heard by God—is found with great difficulty: it is a matter of finding a faithful man, as the divine Book says; for the just also makes known the faith that is manifested, that is, revealed by works, and not exalted by the tongue and lips. Since, therefore, we are all poor and lack virtue, just as in the alms of collections, let each do good according to his ability and procure the common good; for what is gathered among us all will be capable of making God merciful. Let us pray, weep, force ourselves, abstain from all wickedness. Let us suppress not only the race to spectacles but also that to tribunals. Let us be charitable toward the guilty, for we will also bear the punishment. Let us forgive a little, for we need much forgiveness. Let us give to the poor from our superfluous clothing, for it is the height of perfection to endure hunger voluntarily, to be virtuous in fasting, or to be considered foolish and slandered—if the work of demons were to go that far, which it will not. Let the woman give up a gold ring or a necklace, and we will provide for the victims of hunger before they are bound by chains and fetters. Let us buy cheaply, before suffering, the favor of not suffering; for those who have suffered bought it dearly before enduring the trial. "Help the Church, which is overwhelmed with sorrows, burdened with debts, overrun, and unable to feed all

the hungry or clothe the naked." But some men are not ashamed to demand high interest through the Church from Christ Himself; they lend at interest to Him who said: "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine!" and who gave wealth; they do this a few days after our departure, because they see that the poor, having nothing to live on, cried out and complained about our prolonged journey if they did not receive the usual ten quadrants. But I do not know how these words escape my lips; for I fear that the usurers may be angry with us and, clenching their fists, may no longer wish to lend to us. May they forgive us all necessity, for it is out of concern for their salvation that we have spoken thus, so that they, like us, may escape the wrath placed upon us. By having pity on the poor, as it is written, they lend to God, who will repay them generously and magnificently in this life and in the kingdom of heaven. May we all obtain this, by the grace and charity of Jesus Christ, the great God and our Savior, to whom, as to the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all glory, honor, and power for all ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 63 ON THE NATIVITY, OR THE EPIPHANY. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Twice already I have celebrated this feast with you, and I have appeared as a man not without words and incapable of spiritually nourishing the faithful, but very rich and very generous from this point of view. For you know yourselves by your pious will that you will be abundantly nourished by moderate (words) and that, after receiving some subjects for thought, you will be able to break them into crumbs among yourselves, to make them rise to a height worthy of God. Just as fertile land well cultivated by laborers, after receiving the seed, yields a well-nourished and tall ear, while that which does not have a good nature to produce fruits and is not cared for, or perhaps is choked by overshadowing plants, corrupts even the choice seed; so too the well-guided and exercised spirit, even when it receives short doctrines that do not deviate from the object of piety, matures them and makes them bear abundantly the fruits of true dogmas (δόγματα) that give bread capable of sustaining “ the heart of man, while the ungrateful spirit, raised in “ impious words and limping in unreasonable and senseless thoughts, can render even the right doctrine unfruitful when it has been defeated and weakened by the seed of tares sown over it. I have great confidence that you come with the same fervor after opening the mouth of your spirit and receiving these few thoughts in large measure, and because of this, no fear enters me henceforth. However, as I have been led by the will of God to celebrate this feast for the third time, I have nothing to prepare a third meal for you. Indeed, as it is the same subject, if I use the same thoughts and the same words, you will despise this meal as those who receive yesterday's words as food; and if I turn to new thoughts, I fear that descending into the depths of theories (θεωρία) I may not be able to emerge, because one of these two cases will happen: either the spirit will be incapable of wrestling with what is known, or the word will not be able to express what is known. Nevertheless, because the object of the present solemnity is rich, we must not be negligent; but we must ask him to give us, who are weak, a lively intelligence and word, since he also gives the word to those who announce with great force the great mystery of religion. Having the word, I will strike the present subject (ὑπόθεσις) as one strikes gold-bearing earth with a gut; and after tearing out a small fragment, working it, stretching it, and drawing it out lengthwise, I will make from it a golden object that will be very great.

Which of the events that occurred at the birth of Christ is without word? Which would not overflow the abundant sources of words and not show everything as a single drop of water, because it surpasses all words? If indeed I let my tongue rise to the height of what concerns the essence (οὐσία) absolutely superior of God the Word, if I soar and fly at once by the grandeur of the expression of words and by thoughts, I will pass for having risen from the earth only like a young bird that has just flown from its nest at the very instant, (but) which can fly rather (μᾶλλον) in the regions near the earth and not in the higher parts of the air and is brought back down: for as much as one approaches what is high, so much does one remain distant from the depth. And if I fix the eye of my spirit on the depth of his descent " and of his incarnation full of love for man, and if I strive to descend at once by my spirit and by my word into this immeasurable depth, I will be weakened, cast down, and blinded, like those who swim in the sea or who stand on the summit of a very high rock; when they look down, they are filled with darkness and obscurity and turn their eyes away, for the visual power of the eye is not in proportion to an inaccessible depth. Likewise, the visual faculty of the soul, though it belongs to it especially to discuss and examine thoroughly thoughts full of controversy, " becomes in some way negligent, goes here and there, and flees when it wants to consider the infinity and incomprehensibility of the descent of God the Word, and finally after immense floods of words and thoughts, it will necessarily say in turn the philosophical reflection of Ecclesiastes: I have tested all this by wisdom. I said: I will be wise. And wisdom has withdrawn far from me, much more than it was before. Its great depth, who will find it? For what is the intelligence that would unite at once these two points of view, the height and the depth, into one, and that would hear the divine Book say: He who is above all dominion, all authority, all power, all dignity, and all name that can be named, not only in the present age but also in the age to come, who exists before all things and by whom all things subsist, descended into the lower regions of the earth by uniting hypostatically to our flesh and to our intelligent soul except for sin; and who (nevertheless) would not tremble, would not be in admiration, and would not render glory in silence to our support who submitted to all this voluntary humiliation and to him who, though without need, spoke and was rich, lowered himself for our salvation to the point of becoming flesh and endured in his own flesh the sufferings accepted for us until the cross. O marvel! He who alone possesses immortality, the inaccessible

light, the sun of justice, because of whom and by whom Jeremiah, after the kings of Judah, Josiah, and Jehoiakim, and after Josiah, made this prophecy.

Indeed, a few lines before the words just cited, he said concerning Jehoiachin, who became king after the death of Josiah: Is he despised, this Jehoiachin, like a vessel for which one has no need? It is certain, on the other hand, that the words of the prophecy descend to the time that follows and is to come. However, the name of "just appearance" will not rightly be given to any other of those who have reigned except to Christ; he is the sun of justice; he has made the rays of the knowledge of God shine upon us; he has also practiced equity and justice on earth, when he has extended over all the earth his laws (νομοθεσίας) of an absolutely superior justice; simultaneously under his days Judah has been saved; and Israel has dwelt in security. For when, from the time of Solomon, the people were divided into two parts, Israel and Judah, there were until the end two separate kingdoms; but in general all those who were separated submitted and obeyed equally to the preaching of Christ and to his kingdom, and they received a single yoke. Therefore, because of Judah, which is interpreted as "he who confesses," and Israel, which is interpreted as "the intelligence that sees God," those who maintain themselves in the affinities of the gospel and who hold the faith will be called "Judah who is saved," and those who have already believed and have passed through contemplation (θεωρία), who by it know or see God, who are confirmed by knowledge and who are in security and so to speak dwell and rest in what they have known, will be called "Israel who dwells in security." But these two camps (στρατόπεδα) constitute the unique body of the Church and are placed under the sole authority of Christ, whom Jeremiah also rightly declares to be called Josédee, which, translated into Greek, means "the justice of God." And Christ is the justice of God the Father as well as the wisdom and the power. Listen indeed to Paul who writes to the Corinthians: Who has become for us wisdom by the fact of God, and justice and sanctification and redemption.

When Jeremiah uttered this prophecy about Jesus and said: He will be called Josédee, that is, "the justice of God," he recognized very clearly and very distinctly the one he was prophesying about and in the midst of his words and also with his own eyes so to speak, and he was enlightened by his appearance which was then to come and which now we see. Also in his joy he exclaimed: He is in the prophets,

thus showing him as with the finger and saying: It is he who has been in the prophets and who has inspired them and made them utter in various ways these prophecies that relate to his own person. Concerning this appearance of the Word who became man for us, the prophet Zechariah also says in a wholly divine manner: Behold a man whose name is Orient, and he shall rise from beneath him. Ah! how great is the exactness of the prophecy! Who would not praise him who so many years beforehand pronounced clearly these words by his own servants and who in these latter times accomplished in fact the words spoken in advance? His name is Orient, says indeed the prophet. He is the light of the light of the Father, that which enlightens every man coming into this world; that is why he also bore the name of what he is. The property of light and the sun is to shine from above and to project their rays on what must be enlightened and have part in the clarity that comes from them. But because the sun of justice, the inaccessible light, became man, taking upon himself to incarnate and to make himself man for us, he rose from below; for when he took the form of a servant and humbled himself voluntarily, he rose from a humiliation that is thus very low, he showed himself little by little, and finally he shone so to speak with all the divinity. That is why Zechariah, when he announced beforehand this marvel, said: Behold a man whose name is Orient, and he shall rise from beneath him. Speaking of this rising that takes place from below, David explained this thought in a different manner and said that he rose in the west. And he also cries out with John the Baptist to those who were to be witnesses of his rising: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths, saying: Prepare the way for him who has ascended upon the west; his name is the Lord. Indeed, although he ascended upon our poverty and veiled his particular glory according to the economy, he rose so to speak in the west; but nevertheless his name is the Lord; for even when he became man, he did not renounce being Lord and God. Indeed, although (the Psalmist) declares that the sun rises in the west, it does not become itself obscure; but on the contrary it shows that the west is the east. In the same way, as our state was the west, since it was black by the fact of sin and deprived of divine action, the Word of God made it the east, when he blessed our passage to this new condition where, by his incarnation by which the works of light and all that is good among men were operated, we were to become justice, purity, and the whole of the other virtues.

As a king who wants to go to a small, unknown city absolutely incapable of bearing his coming, often makes himself small and suppresses the greatness of the pride of imagination (φαντασία) or of the glory that surrounds him, in order to be bearable to this city, and yet he cannot but enter as a king and renounce in general what he is; so also the Son and the Word of the Father, the incomprehensible and the infinite, wanted to come under a human form into this world which is to him like a drop (suspended) to a bucket, according to the expression of one of the prophets, since he fills it in a divine manner, and as much as it was possible for him, he humbled himself of his own glory and came to humiliation, — it is in this indeed that he annihilated himself and thus became accessible, — (but) after all that however, in an incomparable manner and in a remarkable and special way that surpasses all others, he entered into our world by a divine and very royal door, that is to say, by virginity. This extraordinary and seedless birth, by which he rises from the tribe of Judah from which Mary descended by her family, Jacob the first of the patriarchs foretold, enclosing in a few words all the richness of this mystery. He said indeed: Judah is a young lion; it is from my race, my son, that you have ascended. He calls Christ "a young lion" because he possesses royal dignity and inaccessibility, and "Judah" because he drew from the tribe of Judah the same race (γένος) in the flesh and because he confessed for us who have no freedom (παρρησία) before God, saying: I confess to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent, and that you have revealed them to children. Yes, Father, (I confess) that you have made it so. Now Judah, we have already said, is interpreted as "he who confesses." While he was considering him, “I mean the one who confessed for us, with eyes that despite the distance saw the future in advance, he said: It is from my race, my son, that you have ascended, calling his own race the Holy Virgin from whom, as from a root in God the Word, without understanding that there is only one thing capable of rendering impure and unclean, namely the corruption of sin? And where is there a trace of sin, where God the Word became incarnate without change, where the mother is virgin even after childbirth, where the Holy Spirit descends, where the male seed is absent, and where concupiscence is entirely excluded and absent and lacking? Why, abstracting from all these pure, great, and divinely fragrant circumstances, do you turn away like pigs from what is sweet and pleasing to the smell, and descend into the foul mud of your thoughts, — I do not say, of our nature? For if our flesh is impure, then he who made all things beautiful and good

and very beautiful should not have formed it even from the beginning? But if this formation is pure and has caused no harm or stain to him who formed it, how is the second formation not purer and is there not reason to say that, by the great distance that exists between them, this formation by which he who formed wished himself to be formed in the flesh is more worthy of God than the first?

But beware of precipitating us in the same way into the absurd fables of the Manicheans and, by putting our body outside the mystery as defiled and unclean, of establishing for it also another creator, as they do themselves. Indeed, you have taken away from the imagination (φαντασία), or rather (μᾶλλον δέ) you have been stripped and despoiled of it, and you are very pitiable for the double reason that you steal and that you are stolen. As for us, we believe that he who said concerning his sheep: The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy; I have come that they may have life and that they may have it in abundance, can equally make you return to your goods, because you have been stolen and have lost, and make you live, because you have been the victims of unbelief.

Paul on his part — it is time indeed that we take up the subject again at the point where we left it, in order to show that he agrees with the word of Jacob: It is from my race, my son, that you have ascended, — wrote to the Galatians in these terms: When the time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law (νόμος). This word "born of a woman" shows that Emmanuel was born in the flesh of the essence (οὐσία) of the Virgin. He did not say "by a woman," so as not to give to those who have bad thoughts the occasion to call his birth a passage in an allegorical manner and to affirm that he ran as in a channel and passed like a flash. That is why it is understood that there was a complete conception, to show that the incarnation is true and without imagination (φαντασία): For the days were accomplished that she should bring forth. As for me, considering the holy Scriptures more deeply, I find myself observing another greater mystery. Indeed, because Adam was not deceived by the serpent, but the woman, once deceived, was the first in transgression, God the Word who wanted to heal this transgression, raised the woman to a greater honor. For when God heals or corrects, it is not only the principal thing that matters to the sick, but he grants him in addition even the wealth he did not have. This is what he did also for ourselves, not only delivering us by his resurrection from the condemnation to death and from corruption, but

also leading us to the kingdom of heaven instead of paradise and making us sons instead of slaves, and heirs of God. What then is this greater honor, of which he judged the woman worthy? I will say it clearly. When Paul gives to man the authority and the first place (τάξις) and assigns to the woman the second rank, and that for this reason he says that she must be modest and submissive, he added: For the man is not from the woman, but the woman from the man, for she was created from a rib of the man. But as our existence depends on the union of marriage and the mode of carnal commerce, the man also exists by the woman: hence the Apostle himself, inviting them thus and to love and good understanding, to this that the men do not exercise harshly their authority towards the women, added then: However, the woman is not without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord. For as the woman is from the man, so also the man is by the woman. But it is with reason that we are said to have existed "by the woman" and not "from the woman," for for us the projection of the male seed precedes and it is by it especially (μάλιστα) that we are. Christ, on the contrary, conceived without seed, existed not "by the woman," but "from the woman" properly speaking, and he raised her to a rank (τάξις) that possesses superiority. Indeed, in the first formation the woman is from Adam and in the second formation Christ, the second Adam, is from the (woman), and this surpasses that as much as the second (formation) is more divine than the first. Since you, women, have been judged worthy of such an honor, of what is first and principal, by the intermediary of the Virgin Mother of God, give therefore to your husbands very good counsels that lead them to the future life. If you find that they are the first to do their duty and to teach it to you, lend them the ear as to masters who occupy the first place (τάξις). If on the contrary you find that they are bound by the desires and cares of the world, that they are deafened by the thought of amassing gold, that they pass the nights without sleeping and that they ask themselves with anxiety which debtor they will put in prison, which prisoner they will drag and cite before the tribunal, on the house of which man they will fall under pretext that he is under the weight of a debt and that he is overwhelmed and devoured by the great number of interests, which being they will strip even of the necessary garment, do not pass with them a vigil thus full of misery and anathema and do not stir up by your words as by the wind the flame of the love of money.

But in a thought inspired by the love of God and in a courageous spirit, make wise words resound to them and extinguish in them the desire for the abundance of only (riches). Let each of you say to her husband: "God has given us a sufficient blessing for us" and we enjoy peace and happiness: "from on high; from all sides goods come to us: we rejoice in the reality of your labors, which he who gives the goods has blessed by adding his own." When you see that he has become gentle and cheerful by words of this kind, that he has shown himself benevolent and that he has relaxed from the violence of his cruel hardness, add immediately after: "O my friend, show therefore a little charitable feelings for the unfortunate; do not claim with such exactness the payment of debts; receive a part, and delay a little or even abandon the payment of the rest, if they are deeply unhappy. We, we are in joy, and they, they are in tears; we, we are satiated and we enjoy the superfluous, and they, they have only bread, perhaps it is measured to them or even it is lacking to them by reason of the degree of need. For my part I will also bring something at the same time as the outpouring of your goodness and I will not torment you by the worries of this year: I abandon to you this garment that you were to make for me as well as these jewels in gold and this sum for this other ornament: you will buy me absolutely nothing; the garments that one wears only inside suffice me; mercy towards the indigents furnishes me a very honest garment, which is much more so than all the garments of great price. Inside I will have for beauty that which does not grow old and which is pleasing to God, and not that which is exterior, withers and falls like the flower. By that I will constitute for my children a precious and impregnable purse." When your husband hears you hold these reasonings, even if he is like a wild beast, he will necessarily change his dispositions and he will become charitable towards his debtors. For no one is capable of persuading men thus as honest and pure women, even if one had all the eloquence and all the skill of the rhetoricians. Consequently, if you do not do good when you can do it, listen to the Scripture which says that this sin will be imputed to you: He who knows the good that he must do, it says indeed, and does not do it, is guilty of sin. Likewise, concerning the education of your children, do not have condescension for your husbands. But when they lead them to the representations and to everything else that wounds and corrupts the soul, apply yourself to leading them to the church; oppose to the pernicious voluptuousness the very brilliant morals of the saints; touch them vividly and press them by saying to them at the same time in a firm manner: He cannot celebrate the feasts of God as he ought, he who goes to the

representations and to all other business of the same kind that is outside the Law (νόμος). When in this manner they will have been raised in these morals and these habits, that they will have grown up in them and that they will have arrived at the measure of the age not only of time but also of virtue, like those who have united themselves once for all to him who said: Let the little children and do not hinder them from coming to me, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven, they will be for you a staff of old age and a consolation for all anguish. For they will be instructed by these other words: Honor your father and your mother, that you may be happy and that you may prolong your life on this earth.

You see that it is not in vain that I said at the beginning of this homily that, if we take a small grain of thought in the abundance of wisdom as in a mine (μετάλλευμα) and that we warm it, we will make from it a great object; for behold that, after having extended ourselves so long, we have not found a drop of his words or of his thoughts, as Job says in a place. You want therefore that we make this object even more remarkable and that we encrust in it, as precious stones, varied and profound thoughts; but the day would necessarily abandon us and we must regulate according to the time the length of the homily, because we are obliged to recognize the time in everything.

However, in order not to abandon it and not to leave this object finally deprived (of ornaments), we are going to finish by resolving a single question. Since the Virgin Mother of God descends by her family from the tribe of Judah and David, how did Gabriel say to her: Behold, Elizabeth, your relative...? For this latter, being the wife of the priest Zechariah, necessarily belonged to the tribe of the Levites. Indeed, it was not conformable to the Law that he who belonged to one tribe should take his wife in another tribe; for the Lord says by Moses in the Numbers: The daughters of Israel shall not marry each in the tribe of his father; and the daughter who is heir to an inheritance among the tribes of the sons of Israel, shall be the wife of one of the family of the tribe of her father. That is why when one has drawn up the genealogy of Joseph, it being given that the divine Book is accustomed to establish the genealogy according to the men and not according to the women, one must have drawn up (at the same time) that of Mary, in order that according to the Law (νόμος) she belongs to the same tribe as her husband. How then is the Holy Virgin the relative of Elizabeth? Some have said out of ignorance that it is because both

were Israelites and were of the same people that Gabriel called them relatives. Now, one has a motive to call relative him who belongs to the same people, when one speaks of another person who belongs to another people and that, to distinguish him, one calls relative him who belongs to the same race (γένος); thus Paul, in the letter to the Romans, being about to speak of those who among the other nations and also among the Jews had believed, gives to the Jews the name of relatives in saying: In place of my brothers who are my own relatives according to the flesh, who are Israelites! But we will find nowhere something similar about Elizabeth and Mary: and whereas many women belonged to the same people, the angel would not have said to the Virgin as a precise sign this word: Behold Elizabeth: the relative etc. But as he was the minister of the divine revelations and of the spiritual orders, he has not pronounced this word in a general manner. Indeed the angel who appeared to Joseph in a dream, said to him: Joseph, son of David, to remind him of the promise by which God had promised that the Christ would be issued from David. It is therefore the same here, and this word: Behold Elizabeth the relative... is filled with a mystery worthy of God. In my opinion, this had not escaped the Virgin either, because she participated in the Holy Spirit; that is why she submitted herself gaily and ran immediately to Elizabeth. Because Christ was the king of kings in that he is God and Lord of the universe, and because he has been moreover called high priest after having become man, or that he has offered himself as a sacrifice and as an offering to purify the sin of the world and in that he acquits himself of our confession towards him and towards the Father: Consider indeed, says Paul, the apostle and the high priest of our faith, Jesus, it has been decided from on high that the race (γένος) of the royal tribe of Judah and that of the sacerdotal tribe of Levi would be united, so that Christ, king and high priest, descended from these two tribes by his family in the flesh. It is written indeed in Exodus that, before the commandment was given that forbade taking a wife in another tribe, Aaron the first high priest according to the Law (νόμος) took a wife in the tribe of Judah: Elizabeth, daughter of Aminadab; and Aminadab descended by his family from the tribe of Judah. So that no one would think of another Aminadab, the sacred Book, setting aside the error and showing it very clearly, said: Daughter of Aminadab, sister of Nahshon. See the particularly wise direction of the Spirit who has directed and made that the wife of Zechariah, the mother of the Baptist, the relative of Mary Mother of God, was called Elizabeth, and who brings us back to this Elizabeth, whom Aaron had married and

by whom had taken place the union of the two tribes, and who proclaims clearly to us that it is by this Elizabeth that one must have the relationship with the Virgin.

Let no one tell me that the captivity among the Babylonians has thrown confusion among the Jewish people, of such a sort that since that epoch there has been no distinction between the races (γένος) and the tribes. Ezra indeed declares that all those who returned from Babylon gave themselves much trouble, to gather as much as possible the sons of Aaron and the Levites who remained; for they were preoccupied with the habits of their ancestors and the historian indicates and notes not only the tribe of those who have returned, but also the cities and the villages. Likewise Luke, showing us the exactness of what has been said, speaks of Zechariah in these terms: His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Christ, who said of himself: It is fitting to fulfill all justice, has let nothing fall of what concerns the exactitude in his subject; but, after having observed all the figures, he has consolidated them and accomplished them, for Christ is the fullness and the end of the Law (νόμος) and of the Prophets and the God of the old and new Covenant, and He has also risen for us in the flesh in these last days. To Him be praise and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit for all eternity. Amen!

**HOMILY 64 AS THE FAITHFUL HAVE REQUESTED THAT THE HOMILY GIVEN AT CYR AGAINST THE BLASPHEMIES OF THEODORET BE REPEATED, THIS LATEST HOMILY WAS ADDED, AFTER THE BEGINNING HAS BEEN ADAPTED TO THE COMMEMORATION CELEBRATED OF THE CHILDREN KILLED BY HEROD, AND AFTER SOME ADDITIONS HAD BEEN MADE. IT WAS PRONOUNCED IN THE CHURCH, THAT IS TO SAY, "WHICH IS IN THE NEW CITY", WHERE THESE FOXES OF THE NESTORIAN HERESY SLIPPED IN.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

The act of the image is a sacrifice so worthy of praise that they have arrived, in an unforeseen impulse, at the perfect man, at the measure of spiritual age, and they have attested that he was the mighty God, the child of Bethlehem who was born for us and not for himself, as the prophet Isaiah also cries: "A child is born to us". The same was indeed the Son of the Father, the only Word given to us, because he delivered himself to God the Father for us as a sacrifice and an offering of sweet fragrance. These little children who were put to death before this sacrifice—who would not call them blessed? For they have found a death full of reward, and (full) of the great reward of the kingdom of heaven. This is what the prophet Jeremiah clearly foretold. Indeed, he first said: "Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted, because they are no more", giving the name of Rachel to Bethlehem, because Rachel, the wife of Jacob, was buried there. Jacob himself said somewhere about her: "I buried her there on the way to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem". Then he added: "Thus says the Lord: Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for there shall be a reward for your children, says the Lord". Another translator rendered it not as "your works" but as "your children." However, one may also consider it as the "work" of the mother to have delivered her own children to immolation for piety. What, then, is the reward of her children? The prophet himself further says: "They shall return from the land of the enemy, and there shall be hope for your future, says the Lord, and the children shall return to their own territory". Indeed, after leaving the land of their enemies—the soldiers of Herod who put the children to death—the little children have returned to their territory, and their territory, like ours, is Paradise, the land and the paternal home of the first father. Thus, as long as we are in this dwelling, we remain outside our territory, like subjects driven away and exiled. After our end, we have this hope:

the blessed return to this territory, which these children have quickly obtained. Therefore, they should not be pitied as those who have suffered piteous trials, but rather they should be esteemed as blessed, because they have become the leaders of the choir of martyrs who suffered for Christ.

I would like, as I have already said, to dedicate this entire homily to them, but I do not know how you draw me into another path and how you desire to hear what was said at Cyr—for that is the name of this city—against those who divide the one Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, by the duality of natures after the union. This would seem very debatable and quite useless to me, had I not recalled anew the image (“eikōn”) of Moses and considered it. For Moses read to the children of Israel the Law (“nomos”) that God had given them on Horeb, and again after the space of forty years that they had spent in the desert, when all those who had come out of Egypt had already died, he repeated to their children the same Law (“nomos”) briefly, while he was west of Moab in the region near the waters of the Jordan, with a short and instructive narrative and perfect clarity. Hence, he also gave this book the name “Deuteronomy” ("repetition of the Law"). Therefore, it is not far from this image (“eikōn”) that we too, after leaving this city where there were certain men zealous for the dogmas (“dogmata”) of the ancient idolatry of the Egyptians and not for the true piety of today, take up the same homily again. And this happens when we are charmed by your orthodox dogmas (“dogmata”), as by the waters of the Jordan, and not only by our presence among you. For perhaps there is also here someone who is an Egyptian like the first in impiety. But we trust that just as those returned from the error of their fathers, so these too will repent and abandon their evil spirit. Here is the homily that we delivered in the aforementioned city—after the first phrase, where we thank from the beginning the one who was at the head of this Church for having served his faithful the word of God without diminution or alteration:

“Because we have seen, etc.” [...] (Homily 59 Repeated)

In some manuscripts of the Gospel (“Euangelion”), it is further written: Drops of blood flowed from his body in a surprising manner, like drops of sweat, so that it might be shown that he was of our nature and that he became like one who rejects and drives away the source of fear. Otherwise, if this had not happened

symbolically, and if he had not been more timid and fearful than all because of the humiliation and weakness that are outside of nature, he would have been wet with drops of blood as with the moisture of sweat. Similarly, it is said—what many believe to have been wrongly added in some "Euangelia"—"There was an angel standing by the cross, strengthening him". For this too happened by a dispensation for our sake. Indeed, in the struggles ("agōn") for piety, as in others, he himself delivered us when he made the good confession before Pontius Pilate, as the Apostle says, and when he showed by his own example that those who must endure sacred and holy struggles will have angels to assist them. For if he himself was the wisdom capable of all things and the power of the Father, how could he need an angel to strengthen him—he who had all the angels at his service as Lord and Creator, even when he lived immortally among men? And behold, as Matthew says, "The angels came and ministered to him". He himself, speaking at once according to the economy and in humility, also said: "Do you think that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he will send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen thus?" It was pleasing to pose this question to those who hold the ideas of Nestorius: If Christ possessed the Word of God dwelling in him, as they say, how could he need the help of an angel? At that moment, was he deprived of the indwelling? Or was he who dwelt in him not able to help him? For you must say one or the other. Awaken, then, and know henceforth that you are falling upon yourselves, that you are reasoning against a capital and certain principle, saying that he who was crucified for us is a mere and simple man, and that you blaspheme and speak like the Jews. For the impious Theodoret does not blush to say in his refutation of the "Chapters" of the wise Cyril: "Who is this who needed the help of an angel?" They have even depicted this on walls through the art of painters, making images ("eikones") by way of imitation—those whom these same things have enraged like the latter, and who think to mock the weakness of Christ, which we have shown to be a wise and divine dispensation. For he who came to take our infirmities and diseases, as the divine book says, how could he care that he might appear weak, and that we might judge the humiliation he took upon himself for our sake to be a dishonor? Therefore, it is also for us that he has thought, (missing conclusion).

## HOMILY 65 ON SAINT BASIL AND SAINT GREGORY, WITH SOME BRIEF WORDS ABOUT IGNATIUS, THEOPHORUS, TOWARDS THE END (OF THE HOMILY). TABLE OF CONTENTS

Let no one, considering in their mind the rule (“rigas”) of panegyrics, judge that I have come forward in public with the intention of those who deliver solemn speeches and compose panegyrics according to the rules of rhetoric. Their only concern is to magnify deeds through lofty thoughts and beautiful expressions, to give them majesty, to clothe them, like naked bodies, in the sublime garment of fine language, and to present them as beautiful in appearance, even though by nature they are not so or lack entirely or significantly the aspect falsely attributed to them. This thought is far from me; for even if I had the fault of allowing myself to live, it must be only once later. But let us return to Basil and Gregory, since they have left in all minds monuments of virtue, written and immortal; and since they have led an impassible life, an example of all hypocrisy, to the exclusion of the Blessed Habitation of Paradise, without any trace of sin. Indeed, they had no need of anything other than having lived an exterior life and of being increased in Paradise. But what particularly preoccupies me is that each year, when the feast of the Blessed or the day when Basil departed for the heavenly labors arrives, I must appear in public before the whole world and celebrate this event, following the example of the glorious assembly of valiant and illustrious men, or rather of the champions of the Faith (“vouj”) or of the exemplary (“t'jo”) of the Cross, to elevate our minds to heroic, immortal, and imitative thought. Is this not an assembly, in effect, of men who despise all that is high or low in their natural or acquired justice before God? Or are they not the Law (“vouj”), they who have multiplied the labor of the Law (“vouj”)? Or should we not consider them as exemplary of the Cross, they who bore the Cross, that is to say, the mortal condition of this world, and who placed themselves in the footsteps of Christ, crying out like the Apostle: “The world is crucified to us, as we are to the world”. It is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us; what we now live in the flesh, we live in faith in the Son of God.

By what other thing did these great and illustrious men, these first censors of the Church, Basil and Gregory, live, and what did they breathe outside of faith? For "to live by faith" seems to me greater than "to live in faith." Indeed, he who lives in

faith is still seized and confirmed by faith, but he who breathes faith and lives by it stands firmly on the rock, or rather is carried as if by wings towards the things above, makes others live by the things he breathes and speaks of, and renders them believers. By arrows they have put to death many men whom mediocrity made curious and ardent, and then made them live the true life of orthodox faith, and in this way they imitated God who says: “I will put to death and I will make live, I will strike and I will heal”. Such is indeed the good God who puts to death to make live and who strikes to heal. For those who pass and die the eternal death are for themselves the cause of this kind of death or perdition, and it is to them that God says: “Turn, turn from your evil ways”.

But in considering these doctors as in a mirror, I realize how great my folly is and what the ugliness of my soul is: I am covered with shame and confusion, and I resolve to correct my faults. For it must also be noted that Gregory the Theologian wrote in one of his discourses: "It is important for the individual (“idiotès”) and for the one who speaks to the people not to be wicked; but for the leader of the priests and for the one who is at the head of the people, it would, on the contrary, be a great misfortune not to be far above others by his virtues, so as to be able to lead his subordinates to imitate him." Indeed, there is no profit in the word of teaching that strikes the air, as the Apostle says, when the works of the one who teaches do not agree with his word.

It seems to me that the names of these men also signify actions and reality, and that they were given in advance by God, whereas men impose names after actions. Thus Moses called his son Gershom, saying: “I am a stranger in a foreign land”; and the daughter of Pharaoh had given him the name Moses, saying: “I drew him out of the water”. In the same way, Basil received his name because he leads to the kingdom of heaven those of whom he is the shepherd, and because the word of his teaching advances along the royal path, making the heresies (“zigéras”) disappear, which, placed on either side, are doubly crushed. Gregory, for his part, seems to awaken those who sleep the sleep of the world to make them watch with God, and by means of his name, to cry out to the faithful with Paul: “For you are all children of light and children of the day, and we are not children of the night nor of darkness”.  Do not sleep, therefore, as others do, but let us be awake and watchful.  But in considering in this man above all the love of study, I say that it is

in this principally that he was Gregory, that is to say, "vigilant." For, while by contemplation (“theoria”) he walked towards heaven in an awakened manner, and in the same way as the higher powers, he looked upon the light of the Trinity with an awakened and not a sleeping eye, yet by the penetration and elevation of his intelligence, as well as by wings, he did not fly away excessively or seek to grasp what is inaccessible.

Ignatius, clothed in God, who today has a place before us in this spiritual feast within his own church and who rejoices in the praiseworthy virtues of his disciples, also received the name of Ignatius very appropriately because of the facts themselves, because he knew the future in advance. Whoever has studied the Latin language, even moderately, knows that this name signifies the kindled fire, so to speak; for the Latins designate by "ignem" the fire that burns and is kindled. Who was it who had thus within him the flame, that is to say, the torch (“lampas”) of the love of God, and who was inflamed with the desire to suffer for Christ? It is he who said in his letter to the Romans: “Let fire, beasts, and all kinds of torments come upon me, provided that I obtain Christ”, and this when he possessed interiorly the one who loved him, which is still more; that is why he also cried out: “He says to me interiorly: Come to my Father”. But the resemblance with Ignatius existed not only in the consonance of the name that God had given in advance to Basil and Gregory, but also in their courageous attitude towards the truth, in their frankness (“parrhèsia”), in their struggles (“agôn”), in their sufferings, in the accomplishment of their preaching.

They served and taught that it is God, the Word of God, who became incarnate without change, was crucified for us, and suffered in the flesh, without worrying much about the blind defense (“synagôn”) of Simon and Nestorius, who are scandalized in a manner unworthy of God by the suffering of the divinity. They did not ignore that suffering does not affect the impassible God, although, according to the economy, He is in suffering, insofar as He became incarnate and made man, to blunt the sting of death and sin directed against us. Ignatius said: “Let me be the imitator of the sufferings of my God!” Gregory said: “If anyone does not adore the Crucified, let him be anathema and counted among the condemned!” Basil also said: “All the heavens, all the earth, and the myriads of the seas, the creatures that dwell in the waters, as well as the animals and terrestrial plants, the stars, the air,

the times, and the varied ornament of this universe do not show the greatness of the power of God; and if it is only this: that the incomprehensible God could, through the intermediary of the flesh, be united with death in an impassible manner, so that, by suffering, He procured for us impassibility".

As for the question of how He who, by His own suffering, procured for us impassibility, could Himself be deprived of impassibility, incorruptibility, and immortality, it is for those who, by their virtues, are the friends of God to resolve it, despising the vain apologies of the impassibility of God the Word and the reasons on which they are based. It is because of these God-inspired doctrines and these holy and apostolic laws ("végés") that are a bridle for all impious tongues that we celebrate the memory of these saints, preparing for you this spiritual joy. For, as the Book of Proverbs also says: "When the just are praised, the peoples rejoice". May Christ, God the Word, who created the rational being that is man and created him a second time, grant us, through their supplications, after having passed this life here below without anguish and according to His good pleasure, to be at the height of joy and felicity also in the kingdom of the gods with the saints, for His own glory and that of the Father and the Holy Spirit, now, always, and for all ages. Amen!

**HOMILY 66 ON THE EPIPHANY.** TABLE OF CONTENTS

Oh! What was the tyranny exercised against us and our sin, and what was the multitude of diseases that arose from it—I am seized with astonishment and stupor—since it required all this healing and such healing and God who heals and acts in person, so that it is after the richness of the healing that the greatness of the previously unknown disease was recognized! For it is neither an ambassador nor an angel, but "the Lord himself who saved us!", cries Isaiah, astonished like us. Indeed, while the Word of God was born from above by nature, I speak of His birth from the Father without beginning and eternal, when He Himself, out of love for men and according to the economy, willed to be born from below, He took in the flesh a birth from the Virgin without pain, thereby in a certain way beginning to recast our nature anew, adding an admirable form to the good seed of His own divinity, or rather His very divinity, to make Himself everything, and to arrest and lift the sentence pronounced against Eve: "You will bear children in sorrow". What does He do and where does He go? He dispenses and administers to us, who are cast down by nature, the birth from above and the spiritual, creating us, so to speak, by the facts themselves: "I am born from below for this very purpose, so that you may be born from above. That is why I do not make your mystical birth, which took place in a prodigious way concerning Me, any more painful. For I am in the flesh of the Holy Spirit and a virgin mother, and you too will be born not from the desire or the will of the flesh or the nature of man, but from the Holy Spirit and the truth. Yet you (it will be) to have part in My grace, and I, on the contrary, (it was) to have part in your nature, when I hypostatically united Myself to the flesh animated by an intelligent soul. By this, I became a perfect man without experiencing any change and without departing from My divine nature. However, while I am thus by nature and lack nothing, by this birth I will be the first to deliver you; I will come to the Jordan with the guilty, and by the baptism of John's repentance, I will establish My baptism, which must be accomplished by the Father, by Me the Son, and by the Holy Spirit."

It is for these reasons and other similar reasons that He stood in the midst of the waters, He who covers His dwellings with waters, and that He drew upon Himself the hand of the Baptist, who was frightened and hesitant, by instilling in him the courage to exercise his ministry with these words: "Allow it now", and by having

His head sprinkled in the waves. I myself almost begin to be seized with fear when I consider the immensity of this abasement. He descends into the water and is under the water, He who raised the waters above the heavens and holds them back firmly by command, while they are carried downward and flow by nature. But just as He raised them then in a creative manner, as He is the Word of the Father and the Creator of this universe, so now too, it is in a medicinal and providential manner that in the Jordan He holds back, cuts off, and stops the course of the waters. The Psalmist adds, full of astonishment: “Your path will be in the sea”, that is, in the humidity and the voluptuousness of the passions of this world, and this in various ways and by the paths of the virtues, namely by the spiritual gifts, by the word of wisdom, by the word of knowledge, by the gifts of healings, by the working of miracles, and this upon the great and infinitely varied waters of multiple desires, swiftly and lightly, so that the traces of the paths will no longer be known, because it is in the likeness of something light and capable of flying that the word of salvation has run through the world.

But those who received the Gospel would not have reached this height if they had not been led beforehand, as by superior teachers, by the elementary and preliminary commandments of the Law of Moses and if they had not been instructed and initiated beforehand by the figurative priesthood conforming to the Law. “You led Your people like sheep”, he says, “by the hand of Moses and Aaron”. For everywhere the apostles explained and illuminated the words of the Law and the Prophets and began there to confirm the Gospel when they preached the word (of God) to the Israelites and the other nations.

But someone might take literally and in an easy sense this word: “The waters saw You, O God! The waters saw You”. Indeed, the word sometimes knows how to create a person and attribute consciousness and intelligence to inanimate and unconscious things. The waters of the Jordan, therefore, saw God who descended to them; they were afraid and were terrified. Someone will also say that this word: “Your path will in the sea”, was said in advance of Our Lord who was to walk on the sea. However, the exact tradition of all these words and the thoughts they contain is observed according to the interpretation given above. The descent into the Jordan of Jesus, our God and Savior, was for us the cause of all these goods. From there, the waters were afraid, the abysses were terrified, the clouds made

their voice heard, the arrows flew, the sound of the voice (of thunder) came to cross the circle, the lightning illuminated the whole world, the earth was shaken, the sea was traversed the waters received the paths of the virtues, and the Law of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron, paving the way for the Gospel, were replaced and hidden by the perfect doctrine of the apostles and the exercise of the priesthood, and they looked at them. The figure that took place in the past also testifies that it is so. Indeed, the children of Israel who crossed the Jordan on foot with Joshua, the son of Nun, took twelve stones and carried them on their shoulders, and on the other hand, they set up twelve others in the middle of the river. This fact clearly shows this, namely that the Israelites gave to the Jordan the twelve apostles who were their children in the flesh, to be the ministers of its mystery, going to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and on the other hand, these same twelve (apostles) who were spiritually born in the Jordan and who were completely transformed, they took them and carried them on their shoulders when they submitted to their own teachings. The apostles themselves, in fact, heard our Lord who said: “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit”.

The baptism that takes place in the Holy Spirit began in the Jordan, when the Spirit of adoption descended there. For it is for us and not for Himself that Christ was baptized, when He purified and sanctified the waters, and not when He Himself was sanctified by them. How indeed could He have been, He who was born for us as wisdom by the will of God, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption? It is for us that He externally received the coming of the Spirit in the form of a dove, which He possessed in Himself by nature since He is of the same essence. That is why it is not when He was under the waters themselves that He attracted the testimony of the Father who declares Him His Son and the descent of the Spirit, so that no one would think that, like us, it was by baptism that He received adoption: for He possessed it in Himself by essence, as does the Father and the Holy Spirit. When He descended into the waters for us and not for Himself, He perfected baptism. That is why it was after He came up out of the water that the word was spoken: “You are My beloved Son”, and the fact that the Spirit descended in the form of a dove and came upon Him, so that by these sensible things known by hearing and sight, what was hidden might be revealed. On the contrary if the one who was baptized in the Jordan in our place and according to the economy was not

the Word Himself who became incarnate, but if it was the man separate and distinct from the Word, according to the doctrine of those who think like Nestorius and who separate two natures after the union, it was necessary that upon the waters, as upon us, the Holy Spirit descended and that the voice which came as from the person of the Father was pronounced upon Him. Were His waters therefore, according to them, deprived of the Father and the Spirit, because the voice occurred after the ascent? It is after the ascent that the coming of the Spirit appears under the aspect of a dove. But it is quite certain that the Word who became incarnate, since He is one and indivisible, when He entered the waves of the Jordan, possessed in Himself the Father and the Holy Spirit because they are of the same essence, and that, after He was out of the water, it was for us that He received the Spirit and it was for us that He heard this word: "You are My Son", so that in Him we might be called children, whereas we were adversaries and enemies because of sin.

However, even this (word) is worthy of God and conforms to the economy. Indeed, this word "You are My Son" indicates divine, incorporeal, true birth according to the essence; for He said: "You are Son" and not: "You have become (Son)". Moreover, this word "beloved" signifies the love He has for us; for in Him, as in the second head of our race, He calls us "beloved", we who were worthy of hatred, because, according to the word of Paul, it was God the Father who reconciled this world in Christ. That is why He also opened the heavens, to teach us that the birth of water and the Spirit, by which Christ delivered us on the banks of the Jordan, is heavenly, that it opens the gates of heaven for us, that it makes the baptized shine like stars, that it washes and purifies them from the mud, and that it calls them to the things above. For the place of the stars is indeed heaven.

The patriarch Abraham, initiated in advance to this ineffable thing, believed in it, and it was imputed to him as righteousness, as it is written. Indeed, he often received the same promise and heard from God, sometimes: "In you all the families of the earth will be blessed", sometimes: "I will make your descendants as the sand of the earth", sometimes: "I will make you the father of many nations, and I will multiply you greatly". As many times as he heard these promises, so many times he believed in them and obeyed the orders given to him; and this is what the Holy Book said of him: "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him as

righteousness". But when God showed him the splendor of the children he was to have by faith in Christ and who were to be inscribed in the heavens, He led him outside and said to him: "Look up toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you can count them". And He said to him: "So shall your descendants be". The Holy Book adds after this word: "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him as righteousness". For even this word "He led him outside" does not seem to me to be said simply; but it seems to me that, after having withdrawn him from present and sensible things, having filled him with admiration and having raised his intelligence toward the mystery that was to take place, (God) thus showed (to Abraham) the children who, by the law of baptism, were to shine and sparkle like stars. And because the faith that was manifested and shown to him in advance in a mysterious way was the one that was also to justify those who believed, when God imputed righteousness to faith itself without works and granted the forgiveness of former faults, (the Holy Book) added afterward: "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him as righteousness". On the contrary, if what was said did not concern what was to come, it would have been necessary for it to be confirmed to Abraham in a particular way when he heard: "Leave your country and your family and go to the land that I will show you", and when he left and showed true faith by works.

It is because of us, therefore, that the opening of the heavens took place when Christ ascended from the river; it is because of us that He also accepted the temptation of the devil. He shows that, when we rise from baptism in such a degree of splendor, and when we have become the children of God and citizens of heaven, there will be for us a devil who will be jealous of us because of our splendor and who will present us with temptation and combat, just as he was also jealous of Adam because of the honor of paradise and made him leave it by temptation and seduction. It is for us, consequently, that Christ engaged in advance this first combat by destroying and annihilating the strength of the devil. See the analogy of his ruses and artifices. For just as in the case of Adam he began the seduction with food, so also in the case of Christ he made food the beginning of the combat, saying: "Command that these stones become bread". There, as he promised what was not and was not to be, he said: "When you eat of the tree despite the commandment, you will be like gods". But here, as he imitates what is, he says: "If you are the Son of God". In one case, he mocks and laughs at Adam as someone

who was deceived, and in the other, he wanted to learn the secret of the mystery that escaped him. For he had heard the testimony of the Father who had declared Him His Son, and on the other hand, he saw Him subject to hunger: so he was in doubt, in struggle, and in great trouble, while he ardently desired to know what was hidden. But Christ, abandoning the power that befits God, drives him away and repels him with suitable words, in a human, gentle, and humble manner, to show us, for whom He acted according to the economy, the science and the example of a human victory. For if He had driven him away after rebuking him as God, the imitation itself would be far from our power. That is why it is also by things similar to those by which (Satan) tempted Adam that He allowed the temptation to be presented to Him, in order to heal by suitable remedies the ancient ulcer of sin.

No one, hearing the Gospels say of Jesus our Savior: “Then the devil led Him into the holy city”, and again: “He led Him onto a very high mountain”, will think that He was led by him like a beast: for this is proper to men who are possessed by the demon, who undergo the action of the enemy, who serve as his dwelling, and who are truly led by him. Indeed, if we, who conduct ourselves with full freedom, are not led by Satan, unless it pleases us, toward what we do not want, how should Christ have suffered this? But this expression “He was led” shows that He is God by voluntarily taking upon Himself these weaknesses. We, indeed, when we move and go from one place to another, do not know if Satan will not present us with some trap and some temptation. But Christ, who knew in advance as God the intentions of the devil and the temptations he was to present to Him, went into the desert, left for the holy city, and climbed to the top of the temple, exciting him by the places themselves to present Him with suitable temptations and delivering Himself voluntarily to his combats, so that, after having exhausted all his madness and having found himself weak in his very strength, he might become for us also an easy victory. Just as someone excellent, illustrious, strong, who possesses a divine strength like Samson, will go into the country of his enemies, will give and deliver himself to his adversaries, crying out to them, so to speak, by the facts themselves: “Take me, I am in your hands, treat me as you wish”; and after they thus rest upon him, he will overthrow and conquer them with power and strength; so also Christ, having gone to suitable places, delivered Himself to the combats of the devil—and that is why it is still written: “He was led”—and in this way He conquered him because of His great wealth, fighting with him by the three most

general passions which also include the others: by gluttony, by vainglory, and by many goods: this last, He called, it seems to me, a very high mountain, as the mother and summit of all evils. The tempter presented this temptation to Christ by his own person, so to speak, and by his words, and not by the imagination as with us, when he casts evil thoughts into us: for Christ was inaccessible to all defilement. “He committed no sin”, as it is written, “and no deceit was found in His mouth”. It was to Him that the angels drew near after the temptation, not to help Him, but to serve Him as their Lord and their God. But this is proper to God alone; it is said, indeed: “Bless the Lord, all His angels, His ministers who do His will”. To Him whom we also will bless, who rose, who appeared, who saved and instructed us by His temptations, to Him be praise for all ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 67 ON MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD AND EVER-VIRGIN. TABLE OF CONTENTS

When I wish to direct my gaze upon the Virgin Mother of God and simply touch upon the thoughts concerning her, from the very first step, it seems to me that a voice from God speaks to me and cries loudly in my ears: “Do not come near here; remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” Truly, we must free our minds from all mortal and carnal imagination, as well as from sandals, when we seek to rise to the contemplation of divine things. What object is more divine to contemplate than the Mother of God, or what surpasses her? To approach her is to approach holy ground and to reach heaven. She indeed belonged to the earth, was part of humanity by nature, and shared our essence, yet she was pure and immaculate. She brought forth from her womb, as from heaven, God who became flesh, for she conceived and gave birth in a divine manner. She did not bestow divine nature upon Him who was born, for He possessed it from all eternity, but she gave Him human nature without change, through herself and the ineffable and mysterious coming of the Holy Spirit, sealed by the seal of virginity, which even childbirth did not violate. What is sealed is utterly inviolable, remains hidden, and cannot be spoken of. Astonished by this miracle, one might exclaim like Jacob: “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”

The God above all once descended when He gave the Law on Mount Sinai. The appearance of the Lord’s glory, as the sacred book says, was like a devouring fire on the mountain’s summit, before the children of Israel. Yet it was not the appearance of His essence or substance, but of His glory. This vision was accompanied by smoke, a cloud of darkness, the sound of a trumpet, flashes of lightning, and all that could inspire fear and keep the people away from the mountain, even though they were sanctified and purified. For those who were like beasts by nature were threatened with stones and arrows: “If an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot.” All this was to instill fear. God approached them as subjects still enslaved to Egyptian idolatry and brutish passions, and everywhere He inspired terror in them, for He wished to frighten them with sounds and thus make them docile to His legislation. Paul alluded to this when he said to those who believed in the Gospel: “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to

fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption." God indeed wished to instruct them beforehand through fear and correct them by the Law, so that once raised above servitude, He might approach them as His children in a more perfect and loving manner.

Yet they did not profit from this early lesson. Instead, like a torrent, the violence and overflow of their sins drowned the help that came to them. Thus, in His immense goodness, God also bestowed His grace and the spirit of adoption more abundantly and generously. In this way, those He could not draw by fear, He subdued by love, and after they proved to be wretched servants, He made them chosen children. This was truly the word spoken wisely by Paul: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." There, where the spirit of servitude was, the mountain smoked, for it received only the appearance of the Lord's glory in the form of a devouring fire, and Moses served as the intermediary. Here, however, where the grace of adoption is, it is a spiritual mountain, the Virgin, illuminated and resplendent with purity and the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is not the appearance of the Lord's glory, but God Himself, the Son, the Word, the image, the figure of the Father's substance. He does not merely walk on the mountain's summit, but He became incarnate and was born from it without change: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." He Himself acts and dispenses His grace, using no other minister, for it is not for a servant to bestow the grace of adoption. This is why He gloried in the greatness of divine help and cried out: "I did not come to be served, but to serve." He first became the Son of Man, while being by essence the Son of the invisible God, and thus He declared us, who are of the earth, children of the Heavenly Father by grace. He took what is small to give what is great, restoring the small by the great, for He was born of a mother who knew no marriage.

He was the stone that the prophet Daniel saw cut from the mountain without human hands, meaning He became incarnate from the Virgin without seed or human cooperation. What then will astonish me more? The mountain? In outward appearance, it occupies the lower part, but by virginity and the divine mystery accomplished in it, it is high and exalted. The stone? It is the mountain's summit, the pinnacle of all authority, power, and strength, yet it willed to become, through the flesh, a fragment of the mountain, to be laid as the foundation of the whole Church: "For no one can lay any foundation other than that which is laid, which is

Christ Jesus." It is not because the descent of the Word, like the cutting of the stone, proves His love for men and is a pledge of peace, nor because the mountain, far from inspiring fear, is easy to approach, that we need not be purified when we dare to present ourselves in such a state. For who, seeing that the mountain does not receive God as the God of Sinai but gives birth to God, would not be astonished to see God descended from this mountain, born as man without change? Therefore, having come to the foot of this mountain, I wish to speak of it (after showing the external and superficial senses), but I fear to look within, as into the Holy of Holies. For I hear the book of the Law say of the high priest entering that place: "He shall take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the Lord, fill his hands with finely ground incense, enter behind the veil, and put the incense on the fire before the Lord, so that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat over the testimony, and he shall not die."

Indeed, he who enters to see the interior must first be inflamed and tested within by the burning coals taken from God's altar, and then have his hands full of finely ground incense. It is known that the sum of virtues forms the purity of actions, and prayer gives birth to a penetrating understanding, so that, mingled with fire, it leads to moderate and comprehensible revelations, while covering those beyond our strength like smoke under a mercy seat placed over our souls, so as not to burden us beyond our capacity. Therefore, because I am neither prepared nor purified, nor provided with this fire and incense, I shall remain outside and not examine in detail what lies within, for it is absolutely impossible to look there and adore the Christ who was born of (the Virgin) and took away the sin of the world. Yet, contemplating these things, I see the memory of the Virgin Mother of God illuminating my heart, inflaming it like fire, and filling it, like incense, with a particularly sweet fragrance. Then, as if forgetting myself and struck with wonder, I am led, carried away, and seized by my desire, and I am entirely within. I am dazzled by the beauties and symbolic visions placed inside the Holy of Holies, and I consider Emmanuel, signified and indicated in many ways.

He is first symbolized by the ark, made of pure gold and incorruptible wood, the gold covering the planks inside and out, leaving no part bare and shining with its own splendor. Is this not how Christ appears? He is one of two: divinity, like the shining gold, and humanity, free from corruption, like the incorruptible wood, due

to the pure, seedless conception by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, so that He united Himself not to soulless flesh but to flesh animated by a rational soul. This is what the words mean: “The gold covered the wood inside and out.” Observe also the aptness of the symbol. Just as the incorruptible wood is wood by nature, of the same species and essence as all other woods that rot and decay, yet has the special property of being incorruptible, so too the flesh of Christ, animated by a rational soul, was of the same species, nature, and essence as ours, but had this added: it alone was free and untouched by the corruption of sin, for it was conceived by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin and united to the Word, “who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.” Yet, just as the wood of the ark was above the decay it was free from but could be cut and burned, so too the perfectly pure body of Christ did not share in sin or the resulting corruption, yet it endured torments, blows, division, death, and sufferings of the same kind. For if it were not so, He would not have undergone the test of death, by which He crushed him who had the power of death. And when He went to the tomb and descended into hell, He still knew no corruption, for His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see decay, as it is written. Thus, Christ’s body proved incorruptible in all things, for it was in no way subject to the corruption that comes from sin, and though susceptible to the corruption of death and the tomb, it cast it off without being seized by it, due to its union with the Word, for it is by nature incorruptible, impassible, and immortal.  Leave aside the comparison of the ark and the likeness concerning it. For the gold adhering to the wood in the symbol is weak and cannot fully represent the truth, and it deviates from exactness after prefiguring some marks of resemblance. Paul gives us another image of the divine union concerning Emmanuel when he says: “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same.” Thus, the Word of God partook of blood and flesh in the same way as we, and we know that our soul unites with the body by a union in nature and substance, without confusion.

Continuing these reflections on the ark, the golden vessel containing the manna calls and draws me to it, sending forth rays of intelligible light and presenting another image of Emmanuel. Like a painter, the legal service depicts with successive figures, as on a tablet, the entire economy of Christ’s coming in the flesh, for different authors gather diverse considerations, and one alone cannot show the whole. The manna, descended from heaven like rain and contained in a

vessel here below, signified the Word of God who descended from heaven and did not bring flesh from above but became incarnate from us below without change. Regarding the ark, the wood prefigured the Body, and the gold the divinity. Here, the opposite is true: the golden vessel represents the body, and the manna, God the Word. This allegory indicated that Christ, having offered Himself to God for us as an offering and a sacrifice of sweet aroma, rose from the dead and henceforth gave Himself the name of the bread of heaven for our life and communion, no longer having a body subject to human infirmities or capable of enduring the same sufferings—I mean hunger, fatigue, thirst, and torments—for the economy for which He willingly endured these things was accomplished. But wholly, like this golden vessel, (the body) is holy, life-giving, indestructible, and impassible, as the body of God, who is life by nature and adorned with divine glory. It was not changed or transformed into the nature of divinity but remained what it was, as it will be seen, as it is written, by those who pierced Him when He comes again from heaven. This is what Paul said: "Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer." But when I gaze into the ark, I see placed there the tablets of the Law and Aaron's rod, which, after withering, miraculously blossomed and bore almonds. This signifies that Christ, like the ark, after enclosing within Himself the Law and the Levitical priesthood, hid them, and when they later withered and dried up, He made them bear fruit through the sprouting of the Gospel life. This is why He also said: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." What were these fruits? Almonds. And this is most fitting, for the almond is the fruit of the rod of legal discipline. The almond's outer shell is very bitter and harsh, but the one beneath is healthy and firm, and these two shells enclose the tender part meant for nourishment and taste.

All discipline, as Paul says, seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. At first, it is somewhat bitter and sad due to the troubles it causes, but it perfectly preserves what is gained with difficulty and thus fills with great delight because of what is obtained. The rod that blossomed alone—due to the richness and abundance of spiritual senses—also foretold Christ in another way, who, from Jesse and David, grew according to the flesh. Through Him, our race, withered by sin, sprouted, blossomed, and grew. Isaiah prophesied of Him: "A shoot shall come

out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." The mercy seat placed above the ark, on which none of the Levitical priests performed their ministry or shed blood, and which was covered on both sides by the wings of the cherubim, also clearly signifies Christ, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, as Paul says. By this, it was shown that the entire purpose of Christ's coming in the flesh or the incarnation would tend and lead to this: that He would be the propitiation for our sins, as it is written. "It was inaccessible to the priests." For it belonged to no man, but to Him alone, to offer Himself. This He also did when "He was offered once to bear the sins of many." And now, when we exercise the priesthood, we do not sacrifice Christ beforehand in figure, but in the fulfillment of the mystical rites, we commemorate the sacrifice He offered Himself. "It was covered by the cherubim." How does this not clearly show that even after becoming the propitiation according to the economy, He is still God after suffering for us in the flesh? That He is terrible and inaccessible to the higher powers, as He was before suffering? That He is more venerable and adorable, having shown His manifold wisdom, as Paul would say, for our salvation?

But saying these things, I see the smoke of incense rising and ascending; it hides the brightness of the fire from me, fills my eyes with darkness, prevents me from going further, and advises me to descend safely and retreat calmly, stepping back carefully and exiting with attention. Yet the external adornment of the Mother of God is abundant and rivals, so to speak, the interior richness. She is indeed the leaven of our new creation, the root of the true vine of which we have become branches by the same sprouting of baptism. This is the culmination of God's reconciliations with men, for which the angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." Therefore, the memory of the Virgin stirs our souls, making them consider from what irreconcilable enmity and state of war, so to speak, we have been called to peace, divine familiarity, and fellowship by her intercession.

How will virgins not esteem themselves greatly when they hasten to the honor of the Mother of God, Mary, and to the crown and reward that follow? And how will those under the yoke (of marriage) not fulfill chastely and holily the union and commerce of the flesh, regretting that they do not practice virginity and following philosophically the word: "Let each remain in the state in which he was called,"

because of the law of the Spirit? How will we all not conduct ourselves and live for the glory of God, who became flesh and deemed us worthy of such great love? Therefore, when you heard that I called the Mother of God the Holy of Holies—the tabernacle behind the second veil—you were filled with fervor in your hearts and eagerly longed for the time when her first tabernacle—I mean her house of prayer—would be enlarged by the addition of porticoes. What is lacking, if not our willingness to set to work and begin, and yours to treat, with good and generous will, the children of Israel who, at the building of the tabernacle of testimony, joyfully brought all the materials and gifts of their goods?

God did not refuse even the goats' hair for the cords; He also accepted the widow's two mites and placed them openly above all greater gifts, because her whole life depended on them. Let no poor person, ashamed of poverty, excuse himself from offering, but let him give what he can. And if not in deed, let him be poor in spirit. He who receives the offering knows whence it comes. Rejoicing in the spiritual fervor of this holy crowd and in the honor of the holy Virgin, it seems to me that he cries to her, as to the Church, these words of Isaiah: "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; spare not, lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. Spread abroad to the right and to the left." Therefore, giving thanks and crowning you with the blessings of the Spirit, we say: "O Lord, the God of our fathers, add to your people a thousand times as many as they are, and bless them as you have promised." We also offer praise and honor to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 68 ON THE DUTY OF YOUNG PEOPLE (THIS HOMILY WAS PRONOUNCED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE HOLY FAST OF LENT.) TABLE OF CONTENTS

Why would someone speak as is fitting if they do not practice fasting? And how could we teach that fasting is a spiritual feast, if we do not set before you an immaterial table? How could we not rather be seen as grieving over fasting, like those who are concerned with their stomachs, if we do not show our joy through words? Through them, we nourish you and ourselves, according to the word of our Lord who said in the Gospels: “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work.” (John 4:31) He said this after giving a long discourse to the Samaritan woman to instruct her, and when His disciples urged Him to eat bread. For the word is the true nourishment of the soul; therefore, slightly altering the words of the Psalmist, I say with joy and gladness, not: “My lips will rejoice when I sing”, (Psalm 70:3) but: My lips will rejoice when I fast in Your honor. For it results from what we proclaim, that we sing and teach with wisdom. You will find that the same fasting purifies both the mouth of the teacher and the ears of the listeners, and compels the spirit to esteem heavenly things and reject all that is carnal and earthly. However, there are men so carnal in their understanding that they are flesh itself; they let the abundance of their hearts overflow, (Matthew 12:35) as the Holy Book says, and because of their gluttony and ignorance, they say: "How am I useful to God when I fast? Why did He give me existence when I did not exist and create all kinds of food if I were to fast? Will it please the Creator, who is so good, that I declare war on myself, make my body thin, ruin it by fasting and hunger, and force it to break the bonds that unite it to the soul?"

For my part, I am astonished to hear those who speak thus, and I am so far from approving these wretched and ridiculous seducers that I stand on high, embrace fasting like a king come from heaven, and greet it with great respect and honor. I rise to ancient memories and thereby learn, as much as possible, the reason for my creation and the nature of man in his original dignity. But we must begin a little higher. In the abundance of knowledge and contemplation, He has shown that the creation of the world, as well as the earth and the rest of the material world visible to the senses, has caused the angels to increase the glory and praise due to God. He showed the whole through the part when He said to Job: “When the stars were

brought into existence, all my angels glorified me with a loud voice; I fixed the sea with its parts when it gushed forth from the womb of its mother." (Job 38:7-8) Since these worlds were thus distant and separate—I mean the spiritual world and the sensible world—without any mixing or community between them, He created by an extraordinary act and placed man between the two. First, He formed a body from mud, as He Himself says to Job: "You took dust and formed a living being, and you placed it on the earth." (Job 38:14) Then He placed in this body an intelligent, spiritual, and incorporeal soul. Thus, properly speaking, man recalls the visible world through the flesh and the immaterial and invisible world through the soul.

Seeing the one with the eyes of the flesh and considering the other with the eyes of the spirit, he discovers the wisdom of the Creator placed in each of them and feels joy and gladness at the thought that he dwells on earth like another angel, both visible and invisible, and who more than the angels shows in himself the unfathomable intelligence of the only wise God. The same being is spirit and flesh, seen and known as such. He is not at all dragged down in his understanding by union with the body, nor is he bent or inclined downward by the reasonable movements of the soul. For he had a light body, very obedient, inclined toward heavenly things and following, like an authority, the independent will of the spirit, to receive its direction. But before disobeying God's commandment, which tested his freedom, he was honored with the grace of immortality. For He who said: "The corruptible body weighs down the soul", also said a little earlier: "God did not create death, nor does He rejoice in the loss of the living." The preoccupations were also given because of sin and wickedness. It is written in the philosophical book of Job: "All the life of the wicked is in the grave."

Therefore, those who care for their salvation—for it is absolutely necessary that we have preoccupations, and it is for this that we have been condemned because of the sin of our first father—turn their pains to the acquisition of virtues and direct their preoccupations toward heavenly goods and future hope, as it is written in the Proverbs: "Care brings sadness to the heart, but fools always seek evil." And who is wise, if not the one who is sound in mind and considers what belongs to the same family as the intellect and the divine, especially the means not to lose the future life reserved for the rational soul? Thus, the first man possessed these

excellent and superior goods of creation. He did not receive the body as a weight and a leaden shackle in punishment, as the stories of the pagans invent. Rather, he shows in his extraordinary nature the wisdom of the Creator, who is called the friend of man for this reason. It is not that He hates other creatures, for like a father, He is filled with mercy for all. But it is because, more than all, man proclaims the skill and variety of His creation, since he appears as dust and intellect, without confusion in their intimate union. This is why David also says that the heavens seem to proclaim and announce the glory of God. But he confesses that the creation of man surpasses all thought, saying: “You formed me and laid Your hand upon me; Your knowledge is beyond my grasp, it is too lofty for me to attain.” For this immortal and painless life, He had given him as a dwelling and habitation the paradise, rich in plants bearing fruits capable of nourishing those who live such a life and which bring more pleasure to the soul, according to a sacred Proverb: “The just will flourish like the palm tree.”

It is certain, on the other hand, that the body was nourished at the same time as the soul and that it shared in the power and common good of their nature. We are carried away with eagerness and satisfaction toward material foods. Likewise, when the soul, by its nature, had the upper hand and drew the body toward higher goods, man eagerly desired the foods of paradise, which were above all immaterial.  From this it resulted that, after not restraining the violence of desire despite God's commandment, he came to the forbidden fruit, though he could not eat it for a time. That this fury of desire came from the spirit and not the flesh is shown by the attraction of seduction: “You will be like gods”, said the tempter, “if you eat of it.” And this desire to be God, though it is folly, is an immaterial desire of the soul and not of the body.

If someone says: "Why then did God, who first made the earth, make it green, putting nourishing wheat and other plants, if man was not to eat of them?" I will answer: Because, as a physician, He prepares remedies before the illness. You yourself, why do you not abandon what is fitting, not conceding that God can, like a physician, take measures in advance, He who clearly knows all the future?  Therefore, since we are in a carnal state, He has prepared suitable foods for us in advance. Just as the physician nourishes the sick by removing the causes of illness and restoring them to natural health, so God nourishes us corporeally as

if we were sick. He brings us back to the original and very healthy state of paradise, prescribing fasting from these material foods and recalling to our soul its first dignity through the Law, the Prophets, and the commandments of the Gospels and the apostles. Moses decreed that the tenth day of the seventh month, the day of atonement, would be a holy day called a fast, that is, called by God and not invented by men. Isaiah, lifting them from this humility, elevated and raised their spirits by proclaiming the greatness of fasting. He urged them to spiritual joy and chased sadness and mourning from their souls when he cried out: “I have not chosen this fast and this day for man to humble his soul.”

This is why our Lord, declaring the splendor and joy of fasting, also gave this clear commandment: “When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face.” He indicated the brightness and purity of the soul through the principal members of the body. For in the head and face are gathered most of the senses: hearing, taste, sight, and smell, through which, as through servants, the intellect exercises its activity. They serve it in what must be done and operate with it in common for good or evil. Our Lord therefore commands this: on the one hand, to wash and purify oneself by abstaining from evil, and on the other, to adorn and shine by practicing the good on which the grace of the spirit shines. It is not for anything else that He loves those who fast, except that they restore glory to His creation. For after corruption, death, and heaviness made the body bend downward, as if they lived in paradise, they nourish their soul with intellectual and immaterial foods and, as with the balance and inclination of scales, they draw the body and lift it upward by the attraction of what is superior.

From this comes that Paul, having departed to the disciples of Troas, who were gathered around him to break bread and eat, spoke until midnight. But nourished within himself by divine thoughts, he prolonged his discourse until midnight. One can immediately see the fruit of such philosophy. For he was in a high room, named Eutychus, who was sitting on a window—the house had three floors. He heard Paul speak and, overcome by sleep, fell from the third floor and was taken up dead. But Paul went down, threw himself on him, and embraced him, saying: “Do not be troubled, for his soul is in him.” After this, he went up, broke bread, and continued speaking of excellent things. But the dawn found him still speaking, for he had forgotten the hour of sleep. Immediately, he set out for another

place.  He considered the labors endured for the Gospel as a joy. This is why, showing it clearly, he also said: “The love of Christ compels us.” For the concern and life of those who love God consist only in loving.

Thus, Moses was able to endure a continuous fast of forty days when he received the instructions of the Law on the mountain and was nourished by the contemplation of God. Thus, Elijah also passed forty days without eating when he was about to enter into relations with God, as far as is possible for man, in the cave of Horeb. Because of this, Moses received the supplications of the sinful people and saved them from the wrath of God. And Elijah not only stopped the rain but even the drops of dew for three years and six months when God punished Israel's wickedness with drought. And he restored to the earth its drink with great abundance of rain. It was by prayer, the fruit of fasting, that he worked these two miracles. They pleased the Lord, and He rewarded them. For He saw them elevate their soul and raise it to its original dignity, and through it nourish their body, and He rewarded them as true servants.

The apostles, as well as those who followed them, practiced fasting all their lives and did all things after employing fasting and prayer beforehand. The book of Acts attests in these terms: “While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said: Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, after fasting and praying and laying their hands on them, they sent them away. Elsewhere, it also says concerning Paul and Barnabas: “They appointed elders in each church, having prayed with fasting, and commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” Thus, they performed many miracles and healed all kinds of diseases.

But hearing this, you will say: "These had a just measure of fasting, since they had reached such perfection and were apostles. But I am a sinner and a man of no account." Indeed! Fasting was useful and necessary for the apostles. But for you, a sinner, is it superfluous? "Yes," I say, "for these fasted to perform miracles and wonders. But what I seek is to eat and drink and pass through the world without any burden." But first, it is the mark of a swine's or an ox's soul to have no love for virtue and the society of God and, on the contrary, to care only for its belly. Then, the apostles fasted to discipline their bodies and did not open their mouths to

display wonders. For they were not slaves to vainglory. Paul testifies to this when he writes to the Corinthians: “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest after preaching to others, I myself should be disqualified.” Thus, the fruit of fasting is to subdue the flesh, and the miracles belonged to Christ who performed them and honored their virtue at the same time as He benefited others, for whom this manifestation of miracles took place, so that they might believe in the Gospel. But you will say again: "These endured fasting easily. But when I fast, I feel my flesh broken and my soul torn, and I almost lose my breath." Why do you seek by these pretexts to escape fasting, like a servant fleeing a severe master, when he commands what brings salvation? Is it because it seems that he treated his flesh with slight violence, he who said: “I discipline my body”? For "to discipline" means "to do violence." And it is the violent who seize the kingdom of heaven. But he who acted thus with a certain violence did violence to his nature, because God does not command us impossible things. And he went so far as to say: “The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” We must therefore treat the concupiscence of the flesh with slight violence, and the consolation of God will henceforth enter in its place, as well as the joy that comes from it, fulfilling the philosophical word of the Psalmist: “My consolations have rejoiced my soul.” Henceforth, the well-being that flows from it will pass into the body and make it prosperous and flourishing, as it is written: “When the heart is merry, the face is cheerful.” If the eye of the spirit is purified and takes pleasure in superior contemplation and divine revelations, the outpouring and joy of this happiness will also pass into the bones and penetrate them like a perfume. This is also confirmed by the Holy Book, which says: “The eye that sees good things rejoices the heart, and good news fattens the bones.”

Athanasius, that celestial luminary among bishops, wrote something similar in the history of the life of Antony, the model of ascetic life. Antony had gone to a place in these regions that was neither trodden nor inhabited, in the inner desert, and he had lived there for a long time in a very harsh and severe life beyond all limits. Men importuned him after forcing open his door. "Athanasius says: 'Antony came out to them as from a holy and inaccessible sanctuary, initiated into the mysteries and clothed with God.' It was the first time he appeared outside his fortress to those who had come to see him. They were astonished to see that his

body had the same appearance. He had not grown fat from lack of exercise, nor had he grown thin from fasting and battles with demons, but he was as they had known him before his departure. His soul, moreover, had pure morals. It was not cast down as if by sorrow, nor softened by pleasure, nor pursued by laughter or sadness. For he was neither troubled by the sight of the crowd nor made cheerful by the greetings of all these visitors. But in all things, he was equal, as if guided by reason and because he was in nature. "Thus, to be in nature" is to give strength to the soul through fasting and the labors of ascetic life and to nourish the body with immaterial feasts worthy of it.

We, then, how long will we remain outside of nature and think, in our folly, that we break with this useless life by observing fasting for these few days? For virtue, we have no reason (to fast), so be it. Shall we not honor the Son of God, the Word who existed before the ages and who humbled Himself for us to the point of descending from heaven, becoming incarnate and made man without change, offering Himself as a sacrifice for the purification of the world and suffering according to the flesh? Shall we not honor Him in memory of His passion and resurrection, and in exchange for His salutary passion, shall we not afflict ourselves by fasting? But I pass over this. Do we not see that the attack of demons is at our doors? I would not tell you this in advance if some did not mock, saying: "How long these public supplications, these chanted offices, and these prayers?" Shall we remain under this contempt? When enemies are upon us, we protect the walls and gates, striving not to be vanquished. And when cursed spirits, enemies of men and exceedingly wicked, are loosed and hurled against us because of our sins, shall we not protect ourselves and defend ourselves with a spiritual wall, fasting and prayer? For it is impossible, it is said, for this kind to come out except by prayer and fasting. Let us not despair, then, but let us convert entirely, without ever turning back. For a single hour of true repentance suffices to appease the most violent wrath. These holy and venerable days are a kind of help for us. Let us seize the occasion, and He who honored them by His personal passion and resurrection will hear us and save us. To Him be praise unto the ages. Amen.

**HOMILY 69 ON THE PREPARATION FOR ENTERING THE BAPTISTERY, WHICH USUALLY TAKES PLACE AFTER THE HOLY FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION. (THIS HOMILY) WAS DELIVERED ON THE EVENING OF THE BEGINNING OF THE FAST, WHEN THE HOLY HOUSE OF THE BAPTISTERY WAS CLOSED.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

During these glorious days of fasting, we wish to remind you once again of the reason for the holy entrance into this (place). For just as once a year, when we examine, as far as possible, the return of the day on which Christ voluntarily bore the cross in the flesh for salvation, was buried, and then rose again—destroying through His life-giving burial the corruption of the tombs and uprooting through His descent into the lower regions of the earth the terrible, cruel, and unshakable dominion of Sheol—we purify ourselves in advance during the forty days preceding this (day), abstaining not only from foods that pertain to indulgence and inflame the fury of (evil) desires but also from all malice. This is so that we may partake of the bloodless sacrifice of the Lamb to be offered, the spiritual Lamb, the divine Lamb, and so that we may celebrate the feast not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of purity and truth, bearing nothing of the old man who has decayed or fermented, and showing by our actions that: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” Thus, from now on, by commemorating the resurrection every Sunday and honoring the day that bears the name of Our Lord and Savior, we may enjoy the same sacrifice often and ever anew. Likewise, during these days of penance and purification, we purify ourselves in advance before the day when Christ, pierced in the side by the soldier’s lance, made blood and water—the water of life—flow forth for us and opened the spring of forgiveness that flows unceasingly. And when did this happen? After the departure of the soul and after death. Who has seen life and forgiveness come from death? It is no wonder, then, that those who are baptized into Christ’s death are clothed in life.

Let us honor this divine spring, which flows from the heavens—or rather, from the Creator of the heavens—and which sends back to the heavens the plants that are born and drink from it. But let us honor it by setting aside for a moment the

question of the body, in view of the purification mentioned above, and by contemplating it constantly with the eyes of the spirit, so that we may arrive at the day of resurrection with pure feet, walking with Christ, and so that every Sunday we may walk and go forth in the same spirit on the same path—a path that is trodden yet untrodden, and ever renewed. For all paths that lead to the future life know neither old age nor decay. We must regard the day when the life-giving and radiant side of Christ was opened and the day of resurrection as one and the same, though they are distinct. The water and the blood were indeed signs of the resurrection; they clearly show that He who suffered and was to be buried was, on the one hand, to be counted—as David says—only among those who descend into Sheol, but not among those who remain there, and on the other hand, to show Himself free among the dead and to rise again as the living God. Let us therefore prepare ourselves, lest we stray from the path of living waters and appear utterly unworthy, or dishonor it with impure steps.

What is the path that leads to this spring? Isaiah proclaimed it, having received its figure and symbol in his spirit, when he said: “Water will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The parched ground will become pools, and the thirsty land springs of water. In the haunts of jackals, reeds and rushes will grow. And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; only the redeemed will walk there, and those the Lord has rescued will return.” Who answers to this description of the earth, which was once a desert without water but was finally made fertile by a spring of living water, if not the Church? Once, it was not trodden by God, deprived of His knowledge, parched by the thirst of idolatry, and drank neither from the streams of the Law nor those of the prophets. But now it is completely filled, like the sea, by the spring of the bath of regeneration, and like a vast ocean, it has received within itself all the partial streams of Israel—that is, the prophecies of Moses and those concerning Christ. To this, we must also add the words of David: “Praise God in the great congregation, praise the Lord in the assembly of Israel.” It is in this land that the gathering of birds takes place—those who have fluttered and flown from earthly actions to heaven through the Gospel life. Once voiceless, they have now, like caged sirens, sung divine words, just as the excellent teachers of this (Church) have done. For the sirens are a kind of bird with a pleasant voice, singing much

and, it is said, loving to dwell in deserts. Such too are the saints who delight in solitude and detachment from worldly and material affairs.

Therefore, (the land) has produced forests, adorned with the properties of paradise. Indeed, (the saints), through their diverse ways of life, bear fruit a hundredfold, sixtyfold, or thirtyfold. (The land) has also produced reeds in which one may blow, singing the praises and revelations of the Spirit, charming and calming with their songs those whose ways are barbarous. You see what fruits this spring of life, which watered the desert land, has borne for us. The path that leads to it is holy, pure, and inaccessible to lions and those like wild and impure beasts. Such are those who have been purified and enlightened by the holy baptism. Once scattered among nations, growing under different laws and customs, they are now gathered by grace into the one body of Christ.

Let us also drive from our minds every passion of the wild beast: the bestial and impure desires of the lower passions, robbery and deceit toward our neighbors, rage, anger, bitterness, cunning ways, and insults—whether they enter through the ears or depart through the tongue. For you have heard that the path is pure and holy. If you walk it as you should, with preparation, Isaiah will meet you again with these sacred words. He will congratulate you on your preparation, urge you to enter with his blessings, and say: “The path of the righteous is level and straight; make level the way of the righteous. The people who walk in righteousness, who keep faith, who hold fast to truth and maintain peace—for they have hoped in You, O Lord, forever.” May the Lord Himself grant you, thus prepared and disposed, to obtain entrance into this (place) and into the kingdom of heaven with peace, for His own praise. For to Him belongs the praise—to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—now and always, and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

**HOMILY 70 THIS IS THE THIRD CATECHESIS. (THIS HOMILY) WAS DELIVERED, ACCORDING TO CUSTOM, ON THE WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK OR THE PASSION.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Let no one, thinking that the cycle of the year brings us back to the same day with the same subject ("preface"), while often the one who teaches is also the same, judge this lesson superfluous under the pretext that the instruction will repeat the same things and revolve uselessly in the same terms about what is already known. For he who would have such (thoughts) would also forget, it seems to me, this kind of discourse, which its very designation reveals and makes known. Indeed, it is called a catechesis or resounding and buzzing—I do not tire of saying the same thing twice, ten times, and even more often—because it buzzes or resounds in the ears of those who are not initiated, and perhaps also of those who are initiated, so that they may grasp in what is said much or even very little. For just as it is one thing to rejoice and another to rejoice greatly, and similarly it is one thing to sing and another to sing much, so it is not the same to buzz or resound and to resound much. For this marks the action of a fact or a science that has been shown once, and this the repeated and frequent dwelling and, so to speak, the great usage ("πολυχρονίστια").

It is therefore not surprising that we come back to the same thoughts and the same words. Mothers and nurses, in fact, also pour the same milk for their children, and then they grind the same bread with their teeth, on occasion, gradually accustoming them to stronger food. They use the same meaningless expressions and the same cries, stammering with them, imitating the imperfection of the word, babbling and pronouncing with them small words reduced to tiny pieces, leading them toward the whole, certain, and clear word. But it is not out of place to say that this kind of instruction placed before us is also called "μύησις" or catechesis, that is, the resounding of the voice that reaches the ears, because, as if coming from heaven and a height, a buzzing or theological voice ("θεολογία") descends to the listeners according to their understanding; for it is from above that (this kind of instruction) resounds or buzzes and cries out to those who are somewhere below and who come to the earth.

We, therefore, to whom the ministry of teaching has now been entrusted, impressed in our hearts by the buzzing or the voice that emanates from there—if it were empty and pure of material thoughts, like the voice heard in deserts and solitary places—we will make what follows buzz with buzzing or voice, so that the buzzing or voice of the dogmas (“δογματικά”) of piety (“εὐσέβεια”) is not ours but is found to be the echo of that buzzing; perhaps also, upon closer consideration, we must attribute this (voice of the dogmas) to the one who cries out, because what germinates also belongs to the seeds. How, then, will one think that the word, which draws its reasons from heaven even when said many times, is worthy of satiety and superfluous? No one will do so unless he is entirely devoid of intelligence and thoughts. Thus, there is no satiety for those who see because of the clarity of the sun, under the pretext that it illuminates past and ancient objects, always the same; for it is considered to shine each day with an inexhaustible splendor. I mean that there is the same relationship between the divine word and the sun as between intellectual light and sensible light. But I see that this comparison is entirely lacking, except that (in both cases) dishonorable satiety is chased away, because also by this mere buzzing or voice, an elusive spur of desire is deposited in us. David attests to this when he speaks thus: “As the deer longs for the springs of water, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for the living God: when shall I come and appear before the face of God? My tears have been my bread day and night, while they say to me continually, “Where is your God?” I remember these things and pour out my soul within me. For I shall pass into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God, amid the voice of joy and thanksgiving, the noise of those who keep the festival.”

A miracle! "I desired God," he says, "I wanted to find the one I loved, I thirsted like the deer. Since I did not find the object of my desire, I made my tears my food. I did not at all approve of the doubt of the thoughts that said to me, 'Where is your God?' Nor did I lose hope. But I exhausted all the strength of my soul in this desire.  After having then perceived with difficulty a buzzing—and this buzzing or voice was (a buzzing) of celebration, of men who were joyful, who praised, who partook of a word-meal and rejoiced—I used it as a guide and began to pass into a wonderful tabernacle, that is, to walk and pass to the natural contemplation (“θεωρία”) that appears in this visible world, which surrounds us like a marvelous tent, and thus to arrive at the house of God, (to the) intellectual and incorporeal

beings. It is in these especially that God dwells as in a house, and it is by them that He is known, although by nature He is incomprehensible and inaccessible. This buzzing or catechesis is for us the birth of similar buzzings or voices of those who buzz or resound (songs) of celebration, which (buzzings) are free from all satiety, attract us, draw us toward those from whom they come, and inflame our desire.

I will continue: Because it is a feast to remember God. “I remembered God and rejoiced,” says, in fact, the one who spoke—let us confess that we believe in one God, the Father Almighty. And immediately our mouth will be filled with joy and our tongue with gladness, as it is written. "How," you may say, "do you command me to believe in one God, since you will immediately tell me also to believe in His only Son?" What then? Do you not hear that, after saying "in one God," I have consequently added “the Father” and that with the word “Father”, the idea of “Son” is also simultaneously introduced? For the Father is necessarily the Father of the Son, so that He is Father in the proper sense, not in a vain word but in fact. Yet, even in this way, He remains one God as Father. For there is no other Father with Him; He alone possesses the entire quality of Father without sharing it with another, because there is no other thing, but He was what He was without being begotten and eternally, just as the Son also possesses the entire quality of Son, because He comes from the Father by generation: yet He too exists independently of time and eternally. "And how is it possible to conceive of a Son who is not posterior in time and after the Father?" How? By turning your mind away from corporeal births that exist in time and derive their passage into existence from the course of time. For we become fathers in time, and the course of time precedes the birth of our sons, and it is after we have become the sons of certain men that we in turn become the fathers of other men. But when you hear in the Sacred Books that the Son of God the Father is proclaimed the Word and the Splendor, let the expressions themselves be a lesson to you, and through them, rise and soar to the impassible, incorporeal, and eternal birth. For the intellect indeed begets without suffering, and not as bodies are capable, the word that characterizes and signifies at its core the intellectual mobility and that forms by itself the entire invisible and unknown intelligence. This is why Paul has surnamed the Son “the image of the invisible God”, and Isaiah “the angel of great counsel”, as the word of the intelligence or of the Father who is above all. When you find that the same is called “the splendor of the glory”, consider that His birth is independent of time

and eternal. For just as no one says that the splendor and brightness of the sun can be separated from the sun that shines or illuminates, nor that the disk that contains the rays—which is the sun—is separated in part for a time from its own brightness, so it is of absolute necessity ("ἀνάγκη") that we also confess that the Son, the intellectual splendor of the Father, is equal in eternity to the one who made Him shine and gleam in an ineffable manner, and that we do not conceive by thought the Father first in time before His Son, who is equal to Him in eternity.

Hearing this, will you dare to compare the most sublime generation of the Son to one of the generations that are dragged on earth and that roll toward matter ("ὕλη")? Or will you force God to beget in the manner of men, so that He is compared to our condition and regarded as having a Son who is second to us in time and who also came after Him? And will you not properly distinguish that there is as much distance and difference between divine birth and human birth as the condition of the (Father) is completely different from that in which we are? But since births are thus separated and distant from one another without offering a point of comparison in what appears in them, it is out of ignorance that you want to introduce a resemblance. The (Father) begot in an incorporeal, impassible, and timeless manner, and therefore it is not surprising that He also (begot) eternally, so that He may be at all times the Father of the Son who is at all times. This is why, in fact, (the Son) is also surnamed "the only one", not only because He alone came forth from the only one, but because He was also (begotten) in a unique and different way from all kinds and modes of birth. When you hear "Son," conclude from this name that He is equal in essence ("οὐσία"); for every son is equal to his father in essence ("οὐσία") and nature. When you know that the same is called "splendor," consider the equality in eternity that He possesses with the one who made Him shine and gleam. Let the appellation of "Word" be for you a sufficient indication of the impassibility of His generation; for the Word is begotten by the Father in an impassible manner, as by an intelligence. To speak simply, choose from each of these expressions what is fitting for God, and cast far away everything that brings Him down to the likeness of our poverty. For a single indication is so distant and so incapable of showing the whole reality that it is barely with the help of all that we gather some signs and some points of resemblance, extremely small, as if we were striking one stone against another to see a spark of fire spring forth. However, in whatever way one considers this name

“Word”, it remains that it is fitting for God. But if you do not prudently know that the Word is part of God, and not in the same way as the (word) that is pronounced with the organs (“ὄργανον”) of the voice and that goes out into the air is part of us—which is also called “emitted”, because it ceases with its emission—you will necessarily think that (the Word) is also without substance. Thus Paul, overturning this impious opinion, has named Him “the image of the substance of the Father”. The emitted word cannot be the image of the substance; for it is not by the emission of words that we know the nature and substance of the intelligence, but (only) its intellectual mobility or its thought. But the Word of God, as a substantial image (“εἰκών”), is part of the substance of the one who begot Him, because He is equal to the Father in the same essence (“οὐσία”). Thus, even the Son is also called God: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, was also in the beginning. For just as breath goes out at the same time as our word, as if attached to it, so the procession of the Spirit accompanies the generation of the Word without distance and without separation and is united to it. Consequently, the Holy Spirit is also timeless and eternal. For if the Son was not begotten in time, since He is the splendor of the glory of the Father, it is necessary that the Spirit, who is not separated or distant from the Son and the Word, has also proceeded from God the Father, not in time and lastly, but to be eternal. And if the “Word” of God is substantial, and not like our (word), which is destroyed as soon as the emission of the voice ceases, it is absolutely necessary that the Holy Spirit also be substantial, and not like a breath or exhalation. "But," you say, "affirming that He proceeds from the Father, and not that He has proceeded, I fear that this shows that the procession of the Spirit is that of a child." But it is easy to say that what is distinguished by (the words) “He was," "He is," "He will be” appears for the created and made being, while for God the Father all is present, so that even the past time is regarded as present. Therefore, strictly speaking, He was not and will not be, but He is at all times. Because it is a matter of God, “He proceeds” is therefore more proper than the word “He has proceeded.” Similarly, it is written in the name of the Wisdom of God, who is Christ: “He begot me before all the hills”, and not: “He has begotten me”; and this will greatly astonish all those who are surrounded by darkness on these questions. For if the Holy Spirit proceeds from

the essence (“οὐσία”) of the Father, how is it that one of the properties that are in Him by nature becomes acquired and is last, and not that it exists in Him eternally?

But you will attack us and say to this: "If the Spirit is of the essence (“οὐσία”) of the Father and if He is eternal like the Son, why do we not also give Him the name of Son?" But we say: Because the revelations of the sacred words affirm, not that He is begotten, but that He proceeds. And if you reply to us again: "How, then, does generation differ from procession?" I will tell you in a way both pure and true: If I knew, O excellent one, what is the mode of divine generation or procession, I would also tell you their difference. But I leave to the Trinity what it thus possesses in an ineffable manner, namely, to know itself as it is. I believe and keep within me what has descended to us about it, and I consider it much to teach that the Father is not from another thing, but that He has as particular and special not to exist by generation, and that the Son comes from the Father by generation and the Spirit by procession, since they possess a particular, fixed, and distinct mark: the one generation, and the other procession.

Thus, in an unconfused, clear, and neat manner, by the particularities that appear in each of them, the knowledge of the three hypostases can be preserved, whose essence (“οὐσία”), that is, divinity, is one, as well as the kingship, praise, will, operation, and all the other attributes that befit God. For the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, but they are not three separate gods, because the Son and the Spirit refer, independently of time, to a single principle as well as to a cause, the Father; for it is from Him that the Son and the Spirit possess their existence, although they are not after Him, for they are equal in eternity. Thus, the same Trinity will be conceived in a triple way because of the particularities, while the unity will be recognized because of the divinity, and it will be separated without division and reunited without confusion.

You will thus avoid the poverty of the Jews and of Sabellius, who restrict the divinity to a single person (“πρόσωπον”) and a single hypostasis; by this one and same essence (“οὐσία”), you will renounce the polytheism (“πολυθεΐα”) of Arius and the pagans, who multiply everything while preserving unity.

One more astonishing thing—in that it extends only from one to three and then returns to one. For after two, only the number three comes, and among the odd numbers, so that even by this one understands that the divinity has nothing in common and comparable with the creature. For among the incorporeal beings, we see none outside of (God) who has unity and trinity, while duality is proper to corporeal beings, which consist in matter (“ὕλη”) and form (“εἶδος”). But there is no composition in the Trinity, far from it! because the divinity is something simple and not composed from the point of view of essence (“οὐσία”). But one of those who have recently entered the religion or of those who discuss may perhaps pose this question: "According to whether He wills it or not, does God then acquire a Son and a Holy Spirit, so as to appear in the Trinity?" How very devoid of science and wisdom this question is, and how it reveals a soul that is truly not initiated! In what can be acquired, what is received from outside and subject to choice and power, there is room for our willing or not willing; for it is when we will that we acquire and receive it, or do not acquire it. But what exists in us by nature and essence (“οὐσία”) does not fall under our will. It is, in fact, the same thing, and no less senseless, as if you posed this question: "Are you endowed with reason, according to whether you will it or not?" For this pertains to nature and not to will. Just as no one asks: "Is God God, according to whether He wills it or not?" for He was God always; so also the Father, when He showed that the Son shines by Him independently of time, as His own splendor, and that the Spirit proceeded eternally. These latter cannot be separated from the (Father), just as brightness and heat cannot be separated from fire, although it escapes all resemblance with examples. For fire does not exist at all outside of this, I mean outside of brightness and heat; but the hypostasis of God the Father is not destroyed by the Son and the Spirit, far from it!

Thus, the clear and distinct knowledge of the three hypostases is preserved. This is why, when teaching the formation of this world, of which Moses gave the account, he passed over in silence the creation and formation “of the angels” because of the fall into polytheism (“πολυθεΐα”) and the worship of creatures. He declares it in the prophet Hosea in these terms: “I am the Lord your God, who establishes the heavens and creates the earth, whose hands have created all the heavenly host; I have not shown you these (beings), so that you may not go after them; I have brought you up from the land of Egypt. You shall know no God besides me, and

there is no Savior besides me.” Then, there are also various sayings cited in the books of Moses, against which there is nothing to say and which cover the Jews with confusion. Sometimes they hint at the Son and the Word; sometimes they also make known the Holy Spirit at the same time, and they provide by the plural an indication of the three hypostases in equal honor and unique glory. Here is one for the moment: “And God said: Let us make man in our image and likeness.” To whom, then, do these words inspired by God lead the God who speaks? The blind Jews say: "To the angels." But God is far from sharing His glory with His servants, and He does not associate them with His work, especially in the creation of man, whom He made in His image. For after saying: “Let us make man in our image and likeness”, He added, in fact, after this: “And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the animals, and all the earth!” It is absolutely necessary (“ἀνάγκη”) that the model in whose image man was to be made was of a superior and royal nature, which is the Holy Trinity, and not of an angelic nature or another (nature) created and subject to domination. But you will say: "It is like kings and chiefs who are near them, who say: “We, such a one, we legislate or we order”, and it is when it is one person (“πρόσωπον”) in question that God said: “Let us make man in our image”, and it is not to indicate the Holy Trinity." But God is far from this manner of acting and this vainglory that is found among us, and He never seems to show Himself as creator by speaking thus; but (He speaks) always in the singular and not in the plural. For example: “I am the first and the last, and besides me there is no God.” And again: “It is I who created the light, I made the earth and (placed) man upon it, by my hand I established the heavens.” He did not say: “We have made” or “We have created” or “We have established.” For if God were fond of such honor and glory, necessarily His servants would also speak to Him in the plural. And now they seem to act in an opposite manner in all they do and say. “You have established the sea by your power.” And: “In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.” It remains, therefore, that one understands that this (phrase): “Let us make man in our image”, is written with the mark of the plural for no other purpose than to make known that the Holy Trinity creates as one God, because there is “one and the same essence (“οὐσία”) or divinity.” This is why afterward (Moses) again affirmed the notion of the Trinity in a hidden and enigmatic, though imperfect, way; but he lets it be seen that the one who creates is not one person (“πρόσωπον”), but a second (person). “God,” he says, “created man; He created

him in the image of God." You hear that God created in the image of God, although it should have been said: "In His own image." One can see that this same thing is taught again in another passage. (Moses) says, in fact, that God appeared to Abraham, and he explained to us in what manner He appeared: "He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood before him." "Tell me, then, this: Is the God who appeared this group of three men?" Yes, I say; for God is in the Trinity and in the unity. He who saw three men and bowed to the ground, in fact, conversed with these three men as with one, saying: "Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant." And, having immediately changed the form ("σχῆμα") of his speech, he spoke again as to three: "Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest under the tree." What will one say, hearing again the Sacred Books say: "And the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven." What Lord? From what Lord? Do not say, in fact, that an angel or one of the ministering spirits was a Lord; for the name of Lord befits God alone, as it is written: "And let them know that your name is the Lord, and that you alone are the Most High over all the earth." Similarly, when Moses wrote this about himself: 'And the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend,' he also made this request to God: 'Show me your glory.' But if he spoke to God face to face as to a friend, why did he still desire to see the glory of God? Is it not certain that he asked to be shown the splendor of His glory, the only-begotten Son, the Word, the image of the substance of the Father, who was to appear in the flesh in the last days? This is why he also heard: 'Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand upon the rock.' And Paul says: 'This rock was Christ.' What he means is this: 'For the aspect of my glory that you seek to find, I have but one place and one manner: the incarnation of the Word. It is because of this that He will call Himself the stone, saying: 'Upon this rock I will build my Church,' that He will be visible through the economy in the flesh, while by nature He is invisible, and that He will say: 'He who sees me sees the Father,' so that those who see Him will say: 'We have seen His glory, glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'

If, therefore, you wish to see my glory, it is in this manner that I will show it to you in advance, as in a riddle and to the extent that you can see the future, seeing it from afar, while most (events) will remain hidden from you, lest you be frozen with terror by what is beyond you and paralyzed by what you will grasp. For He

says: 'I will place you in the cleft of the rock, I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by, and then I will remove my hand, and you will see my back, but my face you shall not see.' What does this cleft and this covering hand signify, if not a partial and sparing revelation? For such is what falls under the eyes through the opening by which one sees what is behind God; and this was the manifestation of the only-begotten Son in the flesh, which took place in the times that lie behind, so to speak poetically, and are yet to come. What follows will show that this is so. For it is said: 'The Lord descended in the cloud, stood there with him, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed before him.' You see that the Lord proclaimed another Lord, who shares His name because He also shares His essence (ousia) and glory. He had also foretold this to Moses: 'I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you.' And indeed, He proclaimed it. This is why the Word of God Himself said to the Jews in the Gospels: 'If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.' Likewise, in Deuteronomy, when He made known the one God who is in three hypostases, encapsulating this truth in a brief and clear phrase, He said: 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one.'

I have elaborated on these passages in the discourse so that what is said may also suit those among the Jews and Samaritans who are instructed in the word of piety, and that it may not be entirely foreign and unacceptable to them; for instruction grasps and approaches each according to their own thoughts. There are, indeed, many testimonies (drawn) from the prophets and other books of the Old Testament that establish and demonstrate the notion of the Holy Trinity. It would be lengthy to review them all, and this is not the task of the present moment. What is astonishing is that in the time of Moses, when men had imperfect dispositions, as I have said, what concerns theology was taught in a very hidden manner, whereas even in the New Testament such a notion flowed with very wise economy and gradually. When Christ taught the perfection of the evangelical commandments, He said: 'It was said to the ancients: You shall not kill. But I say to you: Whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be guilty of judgment.' He did not say: 'God said to the ancients,' but using this expression: 'It was said,' which indicated no person (prosopon), and adding: 'But I say to you,' He advanced the honor and power worthy of God (theoprepes) of His own person (prosopon), and avoided appearing to set laws opposed to Him who had set the first laws, though He Himself was the one who had set them; for it was through Him that God spoke to those ancients in

the Law and the prophets. But after the fulfillment of the economy, when the apostles were devoted to the service of the Gospel word and confirmed it with miracles, they proclaimed with boldness (parrhesia) the same power and equal honor that the Spirit also shares with the Father and the Son, saying: 'The Holy Spirit says this; it seemed good to the Holy Spirit'; 'The Holy Spirit spoke'; 'The Lord is the Spirit.' Stephen said to the Jews: 'You always resist the Holy Spirit,' and Peter to Ananias: 'Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? You have not lied to men but to God.'

All this, therefore, has shown that the Holy Trinity is creative and that it is one and the same essence (ousia), glory, kingship, power, and eternity. It is this that brought the invisible world—I mean the superior and intellectual powers—and this visible world from nothingness into being. The Father created all things through the Son, while the Holy Spirit also created with Him; for there is but one operation of the Holy Trinity. What then is said? Before anything existed, will one say that God was idle and inactive? By no means. For He had, so to speak, as His fullness, His own contemplation (theoria), which is infinite and was known to Him alone, and the ability to rejoice in the Wisdom that was in Him by essence (ousia), namely the only-begotten Son and Word, who is also cited in the sacred words when it says: 'He begot me before the hills, and I was the one with whom He rejoiced.' Otherwise, if we say that He needed His own creatures to show through them His own operation, He would cease to be without need. For He Himself needs nothing. But He created all things when He judged it fitting for reasons known to Himself, willing, out of His surpassing goodness, the existence of those who partake in His knowledge and glory and rejoice in it. If not, according to the foolish and senseless opinion of these (men), even now He is idle and inactive in large part and, so to speak, in all. For all is as nothing before Him in comparison to His infinite power and operation. Indeed, as the prophet Isaiah says, all nations are in His eyes like a drop hanging from a bucket and like the dust on the scales; all are as nothing and are counted as nothing. And according to the word of the wise Paul, He upholds all things by the word of His power. If, therefore, He upholds all things as if in His hand, and if all, compared to the sublimity of His power, resemble a drop and the dust on the scales because of the sublimity of His operation that surpasses all and overflows like a boundless sea, then, according to the opinion of those who judge and consider Him in a human manner, He has remained inactive after creating the

world. But before creation as after creation, He is the self-sufficient One. His occupation is His own contemplation (theoria); listen, indeed, to His Wisdom who says: 'I was the one with whom He rejoiced.' And the occupation of Wisdom was also to rejoice in the Father; for it says: 'Every day I rejoiced in His presence at all times.' Similarly, (Jesus) says in the Gospels: 'No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son.' Indeed, these words 'every day' and 'at all times' will trouble no one under the pretext that they contain the mark of time; for it is not possible for us to speak of the divine superiority in a human and defective manner, no matter how great the constraint or violence we employ.

By what is also said of the Holy Spirit, you can understand this Wisdom and this Power of the one and hypostatic God, who is Christ; for we hear Paul proclaim Christ as the Power of God and the Wisdom of God. After saying of God the Father: 'He begot me before the hills,' (Wisdom) also says of itself: 'The Lord created me.' How then is it created, if it is begotten? For what is begotten belongs to nature, and what is created belongs to creation; and how is it possible for the same thing to be both a generation and a creation? Let us listen to its own words, and immediately we shall be freed from this uncertainty. For after saying: 'He begot me before the hills'—and the divine Book delights in giving the name 'hills' to the angelic and intellectual armies, as it is written: 'You shine wondrously from the everlasting mountains'—it gave no cause. For what is the cause of the generation before the ages of Wisdom, who has shone resplendently from the eternal Father beyond all cause and reason? For one cannot find a cause for it to be older than God or a reason for Him to be older than the Word. But concerning the words: 'The Lord created me,' it gave a cause; for it said: 'He created me as the beginning of His ways for His works.' Indeed, when the Word, the only Wisdom and Power of the Father, was incarnated, it was for us that He was created, in that He became man. But He was created for the beginning of His ways, to bring us back, who were in error, to the Father and to the straight path of virtues, since He says in the Gospels: 'I am the way'; and: 'My Father works until now, and I also work.' It is also certain that He has straightened us even after the fulfillment of the economy for which He was created, since He exclaims: 'I have finished the work which You gave me to do.' This, namely that the ways were preordained before the works, as well as the rest, shuts the insolent mouth of the Arians; for the way is the

direction and teaching of knowledge and virtue, by which the works, that is, we ourselves, were again formed and adapted to good, according to these words: 'He found the entire way of knowledge and gave it to Jacob, His servant'; and: 'The beginning of the right way is to practice justice'; and: 'Show me Your ways, O Lord, and teach me Your paths.'

If the heirs of Arius' folly object to this that Wisdom said: 'He established me before the ages,' and (ask) what motive we have for understanding this word of the economy that took place in the last days, let them know that they are ignorant regarding the understanding of the Sacred Books. For the foundation of the Wisdom in the flesh was decided in advance from above and was laid in advance by the words of foreknowledge. For no one, says (the Apostle), can lay another foundation than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Listen to Paul, who wrote to Timothy: 'According to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages of ages.' And if it was given to us in Christ Jesus, how is it before the ages of ages? But it is certain that this pertains to what was decided in advance and to foreknowledge, and that pertains to the realization of the facts. Consequently, this essential (ousiodes) Wisdom, the only Word, the Son who is before the ages, the Light of Light, must be confessed, and that He was begotten by the Father without beginning and in a manner independent of time, impassible and incorporeal, and that He was also created with a body according to the flesh by the operation of the Holy Spirit and Mary, the holy Mother of God and ever-Virgin, without having cast off or rejected, as a result of His creation, being uncreated by nature and existing before the ages. For if our soul, as a result of its union with the body, does not cast off its property—which? I mean its rational character and faculty of knowing—but from this natural union of the two results a single living being, a complete man and a single hypostasis, how much more the Word, who knows no change but exists in all times and Himself gives existence to others, must He have fallen from what He was by uniting hypostatically to a body animated by a rational soul, or rather, changed and elevated to the essence (ousia) of divinity the flesh to which He was united (taking it) from Mary?

We confess, therefore, that Emmanuel is one without confusion of two natures, namely divinity and humanity, which are entire according to their particular notion, and not that He is two natures after the union, (and) that the same is of the same

essence (ousia) as the Father, because He is God, and that the same is of the same essence (ousia) as us, because He became man without change. As for this: 'after the union,' we must not understand it as a temporal separation, as if the two natures existed before the union—and it is absurd to think so. For the child did not preexist in the Virgin before the dwelling of the Word, so that they might be known as two, and that the one who was conceived was then united by a bond of love; but (He was united) at the very moment the Word dwelt in the Virgin, in that brief instant of time, as soon as the body animated by a rational soul existed in union with Him in an ineffable manner and received the beginning of its existence. The hypostatic union, indeed, consists in recognizing that the Word was conceived, became a child without change, and was born, because He was united to a body capable of being conceived and born. Show me, then, a brief instant of time when, while they existed, the body or the human nature to which He was united did not belong to the Word, and then I say there are two natures. But if they existed inseparably, do not dare to break by duality the hypostatic union that cannot be divided. This means, therefore, that we must not say two natures after the union. For, from the fact that the union results from two or more things, is it folly to say that the one who united Himself is one and simple? After you confess the union, do not say two by breaking the elements of which the union was made, and do not divide the one who indivisibly existed from two.

It is also necessary to explain why, when we speak of the two natures, we add concerning them: 'which are entire according to their particular notion.' The rational soul, because it is a soul, is something whole and perfect. It is not, indeed, for the completion of its existence that the soul receives the body, because, even separated from it, it exists alone by itself, for example, when Paul says: 'There are the spirits of the just made perfect,' and when Peter writes concerning sinners: '(The spirit) in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison.' But the soul, which is whole according to its particular notion and considered in itself, when it is useful to the body, is regarded as a part of man. Similarly, the body, because it is a body, is also something whole and lacking nothing according to the definition of the body and its particular notion. Yet it is a part of the whole living being. We also say concerning Emmanuel that the union was made in this manner, namely from divinity and humanity, which are entire according to their particular notion. For the elements that in the union hold the place (taxis) of a part to form a single

hypostasis do not lose their notion of integrity, not because they were united without confusion and without diminution. 'We also have the boldness,' you say, 'to define that the Word of God, who is perfect in all things, holds the place (taxis) of a part.' — 'Yes,' I say, 'and with great confidence. For He willingly did this for you, and this is the kenosis. He who was begotten before the hills, exclaimed: The Lord created me, without stripping off as a garment His property of being uncreated and whole in essence (ousia). In the same way, He also called Himself servant and minister, but He did not cease to be king and almighty. He suffered in the flesh and remained impassible. And when we say that the same is of the same essence (ousia) as the Father and of the same essence (ousia) as us, we do not say two, according to the expression of those who profess opinions devoid of knowledge. Just as our man, who is formed of two (elements), is a rational and mortal living being, who has a single hypostasis and a single nature, who is rational by the soul and mortal by the body, who is not thereby divided into two, and yet is called wholly rational and wholly mortal; so also Christ is of the same essence (ousia) as the Father, because He was God, and the same is also of the same essence (ousia) as us, because He became man without change, and is not divided thereby. And the mark of this excellent union and the fact that Emmanuel is the single hypostasis and the single incarnate nature of the Word consists above all in our necessarily needing a delimitation (prosopon) and saying that in this He is of the same essence (ousia) as the Father and in that He is (of the same essence) as we men. For when it is a question of beings who are divided and separated by duality, there is no need for this prosopon or delimitation. This is why He became the Son of Man, and He is the Son of God, and He called Himself both; and it is not for this that we will consider this one as two sons."

"'But,' you say, 'the divine Book does not say that He is of the same essence (ousia) as us, and I fear to say a word that is not written.' — I would praise you for this fear, if what you say were not the result of a bad motive or ignorance. What do you tell me, then? Is there anywhere in the divine Book: 'The Son is of the same essence (ousia) as the Father in divinity'; or: 'The Holy Virgin shall be called Mother of God'; or: 'The Word was incarnate'; or: 'He became man'? Nowhere, indeed, in the words of the God-inspired Books can one find these phrases in these exact terms. Yet it is with words of the same kind, expressions, and unquestionable thoughts that the interpreters of the mysteries of the apostolic Church declare

them.  For when they learned that God the Father says through Moses: 'I am He who is,' and that John writes concerning the Son: 'In the beginning was the Word,' and: 'He who is, who was, and who is to come,' they understood and judged without error that of those who possess one and the same existence, of those the essence (ousia) and being are necessarily one, and they ruled that the Son is of the same essence (ousia) as the Father. When they read: 'The Word became flesh,' they said that He was incarnate. When they further heard: 'He dwelt among us,' and: 'The man Christ Jesus,' they professed that He became man. When they carefully considered the divine revelations of the prophecy of Isaiah, who cries: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall call His name Emmanuel'; and: 'A child is born to us, and a son is given to us; the government is upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,' they proclaimed as Mother of God her who bore the child, the Mighty God. Likewise, when they learned: 'He partook of the seed of Abraham'; and: 'In all things He was made like unto His brethren,' except in sin; and: 'In like manner, the children partook of blood and flesh'; and: 'We are members of His body, (formed) of His flesh and of His bones,' according to the flesh, they taught that He is of the same essence (ousia) as us. Consequently, either reject equally the other expressions, for they too are not written according to your definitions, so that your malice may be complete; or, if you admit these, admit also that one, for it is from the same masters, or rather (mallon de) from the Spirit who spoke through them."

'What then?' you say, 'you command me to glorify a creature who has ascended to the sublime and royal throne, (namely) the flesh that comes from us?' — If it is separated from the uncreated and adorable God and Word, flee this impiety; for this action would be the worship of man, it is evident. But if it is hypostatically united to the uncreated and by nature adorable (Word), adore it, because even after His incarnation He is one and is adored with the Father and the Spirit, and keep the Trinity as Trinity. With Paul, be amazed at such great love (philanthropy); for He has raised us up with Him and made us sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. He said that we are raised up with Him and seated with Him, we who have been saved by His grace, because Christ partook of our nature. Why, then, when you abandon what is true and proclaimed and attested by the Sacred Books, do you constrain yourself and do violence to yourself to raise up to heaven a false

imagination? Or does God deceive, because He is thought to operate falsely our salvation?

We have set forth before you these doctrines that have been doubted by some men not yet initiated, and even by some who have not been initiated accurately—it is good to say that they initiated themselves—because they necessarily adapted (epharmozein) to the words of the catechesis, and we have used brevity as much as possible. For I did not come forward in public to say what seems good to me, but to accomplish what is useful and advantageous for the hearers. Since you have been called to such a faith and are about to be baptized (in the name) of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, understand then through baptism the great mystery of piety. For if baptism takes place in the name of the Holy Trinity and if those who are baptized are baptized into the death of Christ, according to Paul's word, what else is shown by this, if not that Christ is one of the Trinity, the Word who became man and tasted death according to the flesh, so that baptism may take place in the Trinity and not in a quaternity? For it was necessary that He who underwent the trial of suffering and death be such; the same (must be) at once passible and impassible, so that in the element capable of suffering—and it is certain that it is in the flesh—He might be accessible to combat and engage with the enemy, and that, once having formed the plan to fight him, He might reject him, repel him, and put him to death by the impassibility of the divinity. By this, the corruption of the tombs was killed by the incorruptible burial, and by the descent into Sheol and by the resurrection that took place on the third day, the tyranny of death was completely broken, as well as the kingdom of Sheol. The gatekeepers of Sheol, as it is written, were seized with terror at the sight of Him; and: 'The dead came out of the tombs and entered the holy city,' affirming, by what appeared, the hope awaited by us, namely that we too, after the resurrection from the tombs, will be received by the heavenly Jerusalem above. Who, then, would not run to the likeness of the death of this Savior, which takes place through holy baptism, in order to partake of immortality? Who would not be buried with Him? Who would not clothe himself entirely with the appearance of the dead, as with incorruptibility, consumed by the desire to rise again and be glorified with Christ?

I know that upon hearing these (words), you are devoured within yourselves and burn (with love) for the Beloved. Show, then, by your tongue the desire that

animates you. Turning first toward the setting sun, renounce the slavery of the Evil One; indeed, you have already freed yourselves from his bonds, because he cannot endure the force of the words you are about to speak, for these words are powerful and effective and, like whips, drive away the demons, as well as those who are whipped and flee. And then, turning toward the rising sun, make again the salutary profession of faith; for it is with the heart that one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth that one confesses unto salvation. You have thus acquitted yourselves before Christ of the signs of renunciation by which you have renounced the cruel dominion of the Slanderer and the demons to which you were subjected when you served the desires of the flesh, and of the symbols of the treaties you have concluded.

But we must also make known to you the reason for these (ceremonies). When you turned to the west, you extended your right hand and withdrew your left hand, and thus you used words against the Slanderer. You have shown that until this day, the hand that does the actions that are natural and right was dead and inactive for you, while the left hand, that is, the evil spirit, which did the actions of wickedness that are outside nature, was healthy for you and rose up tyrannically against the laws of justice. But at once you lowered this one and raised the right hand high, thus concluding with good works the treaty of the covenant against the cursed and insolent demon. This was also known in the legal and symbolic figures. For when a leper was purified, the law was that the lobe of his right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the big toe of his right foot be anointed, so that he might hear, because his ear, which easily heard good works, was formerly for him deformed due to wickedness, and so that he might be the author of works that are natural and right. This was also observed when the high priest was consecrated and set apart for holiness, and his right members were anointed with the blood of purification. To this thought also relates the reflection of Ecclesiastes, which singularly explains what I have said. He wrote, indeed, thus: 'The heart of the wise man is at his right hand, and the heart of the fool at his left. Even when the fool walks in the way, his heart will lag behind, and all that he thinks is folly.' When you turned to the east and raised both hands, you made a covenant with Christ; you showed that when you behold the intellectual light of the knowledge of God, you will be right-handed with both (hands), having nothing left in you; but all will appear right-handed in everything. This is what the virtue of this divine baptism promises you. Keep this

grace that wonderfully transforms you and makes you children of light. You will appear in Zion, says Isaiah, as a remarkable river advancing in a dry land. They will no longer put their trust in men. But they will use their ears to hear; the heart of the weak will apply itself to understand; the tongues that stammer will quickly learn to speak peace, and they will no longer say that the fool is the first. You too, as soon as this remarkable river receives you—for how has anyone seen or heard a remarkable river, if not this spiritual river that appeared in Zion, the Church, which has spread universally over all that is under the sun and abounds in divine praise and heavenly gifts?—you will thus pass to a new condition (katastasis); you will use your ears, according to the prophecy, to hear; your heart, which was formerly sick and weak, once healed by the Spirit, will apply itself to understand; your tongues, which stammered in ignorance of the knowledge of God, will learn to speak peace—and our peace is Christ, as Paul says—and they will no longer say that the fool is the first, and the fool is Satan, who was the first to be sick with lack of spirit and deprivation of God; for it is in this that the lack of spirit consists. Remain, therefore, in these (dispositions) and do not willingly return to wickedness. For it is from this that you have now turned away; by the outward appearance (schema), by the gaze, by the voice, you have highly despised its works, its pomp, its error: namely, the flutes, the cymbals, adulterous songs, the rest of the diabolical folly of spectacles that inflame, so to speak, the rage of evil desires, the unlawful unions unknown to nature. Do not let yourselves be subdued and touched by (all) this, so that, having put on Christ by baptism, adorning your garment with the varied ornaments of virtue by good works, and dressing brilliantly, you may be worthy of the divine nuptials and the spiritual banquet prepared in the kingdom of heaven. May we all obtain this by the grace and love (philanthropy) of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be praise forever. Amen.

## HOMILY 71 ON THE ASCENSION OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. TABLE OF CONTENTS

I celebrate the traditions of the apostles, which the pastors of this Church have handed down to us as a paternal inheritance, having received them in turn, just as a son receives from his father, and having expanded them through successive developments as the knowledge of the mystery grew with "the ascents of the heart" (as David says), and having preserved them with care. Among these traditions is also the one that allows the Church today to ascend to this mountain summit, proclaiming thereby that Jesus ascended to the heavens for us and not for Himself. For just as He was baptized for us, purifying and sanctifying the waters and not being purified by them—for how could He who is the Light of Light and knows no sin be purified?—and just as He was crucified for us and, as it is written, "was made perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 5:8-9), He who by nature is perfect in all things, making us perfect in Himself, we who were imperfect, through complete salvation and healing; and just as He contended in the flesh with death, breaking its power and rising again—so also, while filling heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible incorporeally, He ascended corporeally above all the heavens, carrying us in Himself, we who were exiles from heaven, or rather, who even trod the earth unworthily. And just as when we preach the blessing of the resurrection and show that through it we have risen from the ancient fall of sin until the day of Pentecost (that is, the fiftieth day), we offer our prayers standing and not kneeling, so also on this fortieth day, counted from the time of our Savior's resurrection from the dead, we ascend the mountain, making known that we have been raised and have become, in a way, sublime and heavenly, when He who is above all principality, authority, and power (Eph. 1:21), the firstfruits of our race (1 Cor. 15:20), ascended to a throne placed above the heavens, royal and divine. For the Word of God took the seed of Abraham (Heb. 2:16), was born of a woman, was under the law (Gal. 4:4), partook of blood and flesh endowed with a rational soul in the same way as we do (Heb. 2:14), and was in all things like us, His brethren, except for sin (Heb. 4:15). But do not be astonished if Emmanuel, the firstfruits of our race, ascended to such a height. For "He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped" (Phil. 2:6); that is, He did not enter as a tyrant to seize by force a kingdom that did not belong to Him at all, nor did He unjustly claim a seat that was not His by right, judging Himself equal to God. On the contrary, "though

He was in the form of God, which is in the essence of God, He emptied Himself" (Phil. 2:6-7), taking the form of a servant, and without change, He became man in essence, not in appearance. He lived in the form of men, and outwardly He appeared as a man, as the Holy Book says—as if to say that He did not despise or reject the rank of a servant, but once He truly became man, He lived as a man among men, showing likeness to us in all things except sin, even in outward appearance and manner. He did not appear as a prodigy or a marvel, like the forms of giants; for as God, He possessed the superiority of nature, and unlike deceivers, He had no desire to astonish those who saw Him. But gradually, He manifested and revealed His divinity in proportion to human age, wisely and graciously working out the economy for our sake, so that He, the perfect One, might seem to grow in wisdom and grace (Luke 2:52). Yet He hungered, thirsted, endured the fatigue of the journey, and willingly submitted to other sufferings—I mean sufferings free from sin—when He became obedient to the Father.

What does this mean? The sin of Adam was disobedience and the violation of the commandment. When Christ, the second Adam, remedied and healed it, He said that the commandment He had received from the Father was for our correction. By fulfilling it and thus obeying the One who gave the command, He offered us the model ("typos") of a higher life. Through obedience, He healed disobedience; it was the source of evils, from which the torrent of sin flowed, and through it, death entered and reigned over the entire human race. Thus, it was necessary that Christ, who supplied obedience, should go even to the death incurred by Adam's disobedience, and through it plant the grace of immortality by the resurrection. This is what Paul said: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:8-11).

Oh, the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Oh, the riches of the economy for us! How what is worthy of God, high and sublime, is found in human and humble things—or rather, in things suited to the economy, so as to express both at once! What does the Apostle say? "Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name" (Phil. 2:9). What does

"therefore" mean? Because “He became obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8). And the One who endured death on the cross—tell me, was He raised to divine heights? How is this not a usurpation? What? Have you forgotten what was said earlier: that He who was crucified and suffered in the flesh, though He was in the form of God, “emptied Himself” (Phil. 2:7) by becoming man? This is the meaning of the words: “He took the form of a servant”. And though He is perfect as God, He was counted among us who are subject to need; indeed, “He emptied Himself” means nothing else. Therefore, it is also written: “He gave Him the name that is above every name” (Phil. 2:9), a name He had by nature, as He is of the same essence (“ousia”) as the Father and is the Master of the universe. But it is said that “it was given to Him” for our sake, to whom this gift was transferred and of whom He became the firstfruits according to the flesh. For if the same One were not man and God in essence, but Christ were in two natures, as the stupidity of the Nestorians claims, it would also be manifestly impossible for the name “above every name” to be given by grace to a man existing separately. God can, indeed, do all things He wills. But He wills only what is worthy of Him, and nothing disorderly is worthy of Him. For how could He who established order in all things will disorder in Himself? It is not because He can do all things that we say He can also make another unbegotten God like the Father, or make Himself mortal, or make Himself not without beginning or not eternal. For just as He is powerful—or rather, Power itself—so also He is Order itself and the harmony of the universe; and it was not fitting for Him to make the Trinity a quaternity by counting with Himself, in a superfluous and impious manner, a man existing separately, but rather (“mallon de”) that the incarnate Word Himself should be one, for this preserves both what is fitting and the Trinity as Trinity.

There are cases where God works various miracles beyond nature, yet they do not contradict His own words. How then could He who says, “From the rising of the sun to its setting, My name is glorified” (Ps. 113:3), and in another prophet, “I will not give My glory to another” (Isa. 42:8), give the name “above every name” to a man other than God the Word, who partakes essentially (“ousia”) of His glory and His name? Just as when He emptied Himself—for though He is rich and without need as God, He became poor for us by becoming man (2 Cor. 8:9)—He took in the economy what He already possessed by nature, so also it is said that He was exalted in a human way; yet it is also written that He ascended in a divine way. For

Paul, who wrote of Him: “He who descended is the same who also ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things” (Eph. 4:10).

Hearing this, who would dare to divide the one Lord and God Jesus Christ? If the One who descended without a body is also the same who ascended—and this when incarnate in our flesh—above all the heavens to the sublime honor worthy of God (“theotes”), how can one believe He is two and not one? For this reason, in the Gospels, He Himself said to Nicodemus: “No one has ascended into heaven except He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven” (John 3:13). Thus, the One who, after the incarnation from the Mother of God Mary, became the Son of Man without change, is the same Word of God who was before all ages, who was before becoming flesh and after becoming man, who is in the heavens and fills all things. For He said, “The Son of Man descended from heaven”, in the same sense as Paul’s words: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). Yet the Jews, holding opinions akin to Nestorian impiety and being blind adversaries of the indivisibility of the incarnation, when Jesus cried out, “I am the bread that came down from heaven” (John 6:41), blasphemed against Him, saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then does He say, "I have come down from heaven"?” (John 6:42). And Christ, who knew better than the Jews and the Nestorians that He is one and the same and not divided by the duality of natures after the union, and who saw that even some of His followers doubted His words about the bread and wavered in their minds, said, concerned for their understanding: “Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?” (John 6:62-63). Paul, in words conforming to these, rightly said: “He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped” (Phil. 2:6). For He ascended with a body to where He was before without a body—or rather (“mallon de”), to where He always was, divinely and infinitely. If He fills all things, how does He say, “He ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things” (Eph. 4:10)? I say: When He was incarnate, He appeared to those on earth; He went to those under the earth when He descended to Sheol; it remained for Him to go also to those in heaven once incarnate, to fill all things by the blessing (“euergesia”) flowing from the incarnation, delivering some from the curse of sin and the bonds of death, and revealing to others the depths of His wisdom. That the heavenly powers also knew fully the hidden riches of divine wisdom through the economy for us is certain,

first from what those who marveled at the birth of Emmanuel said: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men” (Luke 2:14), and very clearly from what Paul wrote to the Ephesians: “That through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” (Eph. 3:10).

Therefore, since this is so arranged, before Him who was incarnate, “every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (Phil. 2:10)—that is, they acknowledge His lordship (for what knee could be imagined for incorporeal beings?). “And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:11). For there is now no nation or language without some who have confessed faith in Christ and through Him and in Him know the Father; for “whoever has seen the Son has seen the Father” (John 14:9), and the glory of the Son is the glory of the Father. These words also refute the folly of Arius and Eunomius, who say that the Son of God is a creature and does not resemble the Father. For it would not be just for the name “above every name” to be given to a creature or to one who does not resemble God the Father in essence (“ousia”). If the Son were a creature and one of all creatures—counted among them because He was created, even if first—as those who cloak themselves in this impiety say, and if such a name were given to Him, He would cease to be above every name; for He would be one creature among all, receiving a human and economic name among all names, not the one He has by nature as God. Therefore, Paul did not say, “He gave Him to be called God”, for this too is given to us by His word: “I said, "You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High” (Ps. 82:6). But to lift the minds of the hearers from a lowly and human comparison, when he raised his discourse and elevated it with the truth of the matter, he called Him “the name above every name”, making it clear that He is above every creature and none of the created beings can be compared to Him. Therefore, the first, ancient, and most divine of the Hebrews, through whom the divine words and errorless prophecies of future things were revealed, also called Him “the Unnameable”, giving Him a name that surpasses and is exalted above every name; and Paul, for his part, surnamed Him “the name above every name”. But the words “He highly exalted Him” (Phil. 2:9) further show that Emmanuel is above every creature as God by nature.

Take, for example, the three youths who glorified the Lord in the midst of the flame and an exceedingly terrible fire: they gathered and accepted into their spiritual choir the angels, the powers, and all spiritual and sensible creation, attributing to the Lord of all alone to be praised and highly exalted. Who, then, can worthily praise the generosity and greatness of Christ's love ("philanthropia") and His infinite condescension? Moses once ascended Mount Sinai and remained forty days without food, abstaining from bread and water, merely to see the appearance of God's glory, which appeared to him as fire mixed with darkness and smoke. But Christ, the Word of God, the true and unmixed Light, leaped down from the heights as into a depth, slipped and descended into the depths of the earth—or rather ("mallon de"), into the lower regions of the earth—drew us out, and raised us up, we who were submerged in sin and death. After rising from the dead, He lived forty days with the disciples, eating and drinking repeatedly, confirming that the economy in the flesh is beyond imagination ("phantasia"). And thus He ascended to heaven, carrying us all in Himself, because He had been incarnate in our nature.

Why then, O man, do you doubt and not believe in the resurrection of our flesh and the kingdom of heaven, when you have Christ as your pledge, who was incarnate of your race ("genos"), rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and entered there? If, indeed, He did not assume our flesh—as the vanity of Eutyches claims—He made our pledge false, and the object of future hope is full of error and subject to doubt. We would then suffer the same fate as those deceived by usurers who, for genuine gold or silver coins, received pledges that appeared to be gold but were inwardly copper, merely plated with gold. But, bidding farewell to such stories and fables, let us assent to Paul, who says: "For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:21-22). And while He was ascending to heaven, the apostles gazed at Him and marveled, holding their souls in suspense as they fixed their eyes and attention on Him, and they heard the angels standing beside them say: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Therefore, they did not cease or stop looking at Him, and thus they lived and prepared themselves for the future spectacle. Yet these words were not addressed to them alone but through them to all believers, so that we too might look to Him and meditate on the honor bestowed upon us when we are

seated with these firstfruits above all principality and authority. But you are insensible to this honor and run to the stadium, the training ground of wild beasts, where you see men of your own race (“genos”) fighting and struggling with them, torn and mangled, while you shout and cheer—"Well done! Bravo!"—and you consider it a great thing to be called their companions. But you do not imitate Paul, who said, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Though I have many more touching things to say, I will stop and conclude the homily out of respect for this great and adorable feast, praying to Christ, who was exalted for us and ascended for Himself, that He may raise our minds, dragged downward, to heaven by His grace, love (“philanthropia”), and mercy; to Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 72 ON THE DEPOSITION OF THE SACRED BODIES OF THE HOLY MARTYRS PHOCAS AND PROCOPIUS IN THE CHURCH CALLED ST. MICHAEL'S. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Great is the virtue of Christ's coming in the flesh and His divine manifestation, and experience itself has shown it to be so powerful and so true that even those outside the faith exclaim with Paul: “Without doubt, the mystery of godliness is great” (1 Tim. 3:16). Indeed, one will find, through the historical accounts in the divine Book—still read among the Jews though not understood—that even they, before Christ's appearance in the world, frequently fell into idolatry and chose the honor and pleasure of demons over God. They were often punished by the attacks and plundering of their neighbors and the barbarians beyond their borders, yet they did not convert or turn from their error. And after Christianity arose, flourished, and shone brightly as the true and proper religion, they are now covered in shame when compared to us, still running untimely to the Book of the Law and the one God—while the spirit of the Law reveals Him known in unity and Trinity: unity in the identity of essence, and Trinity in the distinction and unconfused hypostases. Thus, as it is written, they persist in fighting and resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). Among the Greeks as well, it is easy to see that their wisest philosophers, those who shone in ancient times, openly introduced senseless and allegorical cults and ceremonies, leading to polytheism and idol worship. Those who came after the Christian religion had risen and shone were covered in shame by our radiance and purity, horrified by what was celebrated and adored among them. They tried, with ridiculous sophisms and various explanations, to conceal the folly of their predecessors' teachings, yet they could not hide the magnitude of this folly, even moderately, through persuasion. Indeed, they sought to borrow images from the truth found among us to bolster their own vain and unstable opinions and errors.

Thus, when the divine Book speaks of angels, archangels, virtues, powers, thrones, dominions, and other names of the intellectual orders—not all named now but perhaps to be known in the age to come, according to each one's preparation and purification through virtuous labors—they imagined they had found a defense for the polytheism professed among them. Ashamed and confused by these allegories and the men they deified, they harbor hidden impiety and carry within themselves the offspring that will devour them, like vipers whose young destroy them at birth.

They worship angels as gods, exceeding proper limits and disguising idolatry under the appearance of piety. Even many who claim to be Christians are afflicted by this, hiding a pagan spirit under sheep's skin and ignoring the magnificence and supreme superiority of our mystery. We are so far from worshiping angels or attributing to them honors due to God alone that we have even chosen irreconcilable conflict with the Arians, who say, “There was a time when the Word of God was not”—He who is in the beginning, who is with God, and who is God (John 1:1). They also claim that the eternal and holy Spirit existed temporally after the Father and the Son. For whatever is not of the uncreated nature or essence is not God, even if it existed before other creatures. As the prophet says: “There shall be no new god in you, nor shall you worship a foreign god” (Ps. 81:9). What is new is not eternal but made in time, subject to time, for Paul cries: “In these last days, the Father has spoken to us by His Son, through whom He also created the ages” (Heb. 1:2). How could the Creator of all ages not exist in all time? But He who was not in time came in a portion of time. We acknowledge that angels and all the celestial orders were created by God and are not gods, for us there is one God the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things (1 Cor. 8:6). David, the most divine of prophets, sings to the God of the universe: “Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire” (Ps. 104:4). Elsewhere he says: “Bless the Lord, all His angels, mighty in strength, who do His word” (Ps. 103:20). To this, we may add the Apostle’s words: “Are they not all ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb. 1:14). They are created spirits, intellectual and incorporeal, whose task is to praise God, receive divine commands, and execute them swiftly and powerfully. They possess strength suited to their missions, sent for the ministry of our salvation and partaking of the uncreated, essential light of the Holy Trinity, illuminated by it. Thus, those who serve as attendants, bearing lances and armed, are called angels of light—not because they appear in visible forms (for what is beyond bodily grossness is necessarily without form), but because they are perceived and understood through spiritual visions, using names and actions familiar to us to display the universal kingship and power of the Almighty, called sometimes “Lord of Hosts” and sometimes “Lord Sabaoth” (for “Sabaoth” means “armies”). Hence, Luke says: “A multitude of the heavenly host appeared to the shepherds, saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men” (Luke 2:13-14). No one should judge angels by the forms in which they sometimes

appeared to holy men, for these forms vary according to the need and the perceptive capacity of those who saw them.

Daniel, consumed by the depths of wisdom and the intellectual beauty of divine visions—rightly called "a man of desires" (Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19)—saw diverse and varying forms, reflecting the complexity of the revelations. Once he saw Gabriel as a flying man, symbolizing speed (Dan. 9:21). Another time, he saw a man clothed in linen, girded with gold, his body like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and feet like polished bronze, and his voice like a multitude's roar (Dan. 10:5-6). These visions signify the difficulty of interpreting future events divided among many kingdoms, as shown by the diversity of materials and the confused voice of the crowd. Thus, Daniel needed explanations: "Understand the words I speak to you" (Dan. 10:11). If we thought angelic essences matched their apparitions, we would have to believe they are material and varied—yet they are immaterial and simple, for "Are they not all ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14). Was not Gabriel sent to announce the Mother of God to us, the heirs of salvation? Did not the angels at the divine tomb, announcing the resurrection, appear in shining white robes, suited to the light of divine knowledge? Shall we not count as blessed those who delight in heavenly illumination and execute divine commands? Yes, with great confidence. We honor them all the more knowing they are true ministers of the good God and Lord, joyful over our salvation. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:7), declared Christ the divine Word. The heavenly armies rejoice, for He said: "I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10). And again: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you their angels always see the face of My Father in heaven" (Matt. 18:10). It is also written: "The Seraphim cover their faces" (Isa. 6:2), unable to behold God's glory. Scripture varies its teaching according to our understanding: the Seraphim, with many wings, signify the inaccessibility of divine glory, while the angels guarding the least among us, who continually see the Father's face, show their great charity and peace, akin to the freedom of those who converse with high princes.

Similarly, the prophet, fearing God's terrible visitation, cries: "Turn Your face from my sins!" (Ps. 51:9), yet seeking peace, he says: "Make Your face shine on Your

servant; do not turn Your face away" (Ps. 69:17). Thus, the "faces" of God are to be understood spiritually, not as bodily forms. Angels are said to see God's face continually as they zealously guard us and intercede for us. This is hinted by the angel who told Daniel, "No one stands with me against these except Michael your prince" (Dan. 10:21). Nations, cities, and individuals—especially God-fearers—are given angels as guardians, faithful officers, and soldiers of the great King. "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him" (Ps. 34:7). The word "encamps" shows that one angel's aid equals a whole army. But let us not dishonor them with pagan-like excess, forgetting they are servants. The angel who spoke to Manoah said: "If you offer a burnt offering, offer it to the Lord" (Judg. 13:16). So too, Barnabas and Paul, servants as faithful as angels, refused sacrifice from Lycaonian demon-worshipers, crying: "Men, why are you doing this? We are men like you, preaching that you should turn from idols to the living God" (Acts 14:15). Pagans, however, used tricks to secure worship, unlike the celestial spirits, who tremble before God's majesty, mindful of the fall of the Accuser, once of their order, who "stretched out his neck against the Lord Almighty" (Job 15:25-26). Yet insolent painters, serving pagan fantasies, clothe Michael and Gabriel in royal purple and crowns, dishonoring them beyond their station. For such reasons, those who honor angels foolishly, abandoning the Church's laws, have been anathematized by the holy canons. We, following these canons, consecrate temples under the angels' names with the sacred relics of martyrs—their victorious ashes, wholly consumed in heroic sacrifice—showing they too are powers like angels. As David sang of angels, they "are mighty in strength, perform His word, and do His will" (Ps. 103:20-21), though once bound to flesh. They turned from it as foreign, living incorporeally and working miracles. Yet they never forgot their servitude. Let us not think angels are other than ministers and servants.

God similarly dealt with Israel leaning toward idolatry, allowing sacrifice only to Himself, mixing figures of spiritual service to draw them to truth. Thus, martyrs mingled with angels teach us to reject deceit, for both share one task: praising and serving God for our salvation. In heaven, they dwell together, as Paul attests, uniting "the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven" with "myriads of angels" (Heb. 12:22-23). These are those reborn by faith and baptism, adopted and made co-heirs with Christ, all firstborn by grace. Gregory the Theologian says: "There will be a general assembly of heavenly and earthly armies, for I believe they

rejoice and feast with us today, if they truly love men and God" (Or. 38). Thus, we unite martyrs and angels as faithful servants of one Master, one assembly loving God and man. We do not, like pagans, drive out angels with martyrs' relics under pretext of violent death—else angels would not dwell by the Crucified's tomb, as lance-bearers by kings' palaces, nor say to the women: "You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen" (Mark 16:6). How could they who honored the Crucified despise those who suffered for Him or shun the dust of chaste and virtuous members that heals and casts out demons? In Palestine, Procope works such wonders at Caesarea; in Pontus, Phocas appears to storm-tossed sailors, guiding them safely. Angels now dwell with these martyrs' relics in this place, loving and praising them and their spirits. They honor those who lived incorporeally in the body, like themselves, and do not shrink from the mortality of the virtuous. Why marvel at this, when God told Israel hastening from Egypt with Joseph's bones: "I send an angel before you to guard you" (Ex. 23:20)? Nay, He went Himself, for Moses said: "If You do not go with us, do not send us up" (Ex. 33:15), and God replied: "I will do as you ask, for you have found favor in My sight" (Ex. 33:17). This when touching the dead was deemed dishonorable under the Law's childish commandments, teaching us allegorically to shun dead works of sin. Michael himself guarded Moses' tomb when the Accuser resisted, God permitting this to show those of gross understanding the unseen: that after death, the Accuser and his evil armies fight souls ascending, triumphing over the wicked but vanquished by the righteous with angelic aid—as Antony the ascetic saw. Scripture says: "The Archangel Michael, disputing with the Devil over Moses' body, did not dare bring a slanderous judgment, but said: The Lord rebuke you!" (Jude 9). Since we are deemed worthy of such mysteries and goods, let us praise Christ, God of angels and martyrs, thanking Him for all. To Him, with the Father and Holy Spirit, be praise, honor, and power, now and forever. Amen.

## HOMILY 73 ON SAINT MARTYR BARLAHA. TABLE OF CONTENTS

It seems to me that I see the sacred old man and martyr Barlaha casting a penetrating gaze upon me and ardently accusing my silence—not only ardently but with just reason. He accuses me thus and says: "Do you not hear, O you, the Apostle Paul affirm and say: “There is no partiality with God”? How then is it that you have twice already given such rich praise to the Forty Martyrs, to whom this holy temple is given (as their share) along with me, and yet you have not concerned yourself with my struggles? Behold, this year is the third, and you have not bestowed upon me a single word of praise, nor have you exhorted even one faithful to virtue by (the consideration of) my combats (ἀγών). For I desire not praise (ἔπαινος), but the benefit of my brethren. As for me, indeed, I have learned to sing with the prophet David before the God who instituted the combats (ἀγών): “My praise comes from You in the great Church”." This great Church, which nothing should surpass in grandeur, is the one that will gather on the day of judgment, when all rational creation will stand together in a single assembly with fear before the Judge, who, like a king, will be surrounded by spears, angels, archangels, and the entire intellectual army (στρατιά). As it is written, “He calls the heavens above and the earth to judge His people”; that is, He separates those who have accomplished heavenly things from those who have practiced earthly things. To the former, He grants rest and a dwelling on high, while the latter He leaves, like the earth, to incline downward and, once dragged down, to plunge into the fire of Gehenna.

As for me, I will rise upon hearing these (words) before Him who is aged and filled with (wisdom), and I will defend myself with the days past in virtue and the days belonging to true life. The Book of the Law (νόμος) itself commands me to stand in the presence (προσώπου) of the old man and to honor the person (πρόσωπον) of the old man. I will speak, and in my defense, I will at the same time offer praise (ἔπαινος). I know, O our father, that in a decrepit body, you have shown a valiant and youthful ardor, and through your patience, you have elevated it to great heights. But what shall I do, I who am occupied and troubled by countless cares? I am utterly incapable of applying my tongue to these sacred matters in a distinguished manner, and for this reason, I fear that I may diminish rather than exalt your virtues. For I am convinced that the magnificence (μεγαλοπρέπεια) of

your heroic deeds (ἀθλησις) has no need of lofty and sublime words, but that it suffices to elevate the listeners to heaven even through the mere narration. Indeed, what you needed to say—because you possessed wisdom and were disposed and prepared for it by your great age—you have said “without diminishment”. And what belonged to youth and not to your (age), what no one believed before you suffered it, and what was consequently regarded as foreign to the old man—you have shown it through your patience. For it belonged not only to youth but also to the diamond (ἀδάμας) or any other harder and firmer material (ὕλη) to endure these tortures. Nevertheless, when the judge asked him: "What is Christianity?" this man, wise in spirit and old in intelligence, replied: "It is the truth of the doctrines (δόγματα) and the preparation for a glorious life." And when the astonished judge further inquired: "What is God, whom the Christian promises to believe in?" he answered: "(He pledges) to worship God the Father, His only Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, but he will never consent to worship creatures, as the foolish pagans do."

At these words, the judge imagined that the theology (θεολογία) of the righteous man was a defense (συνήγορον) of his own error, and laughing, he said: "Behold, you yourself serve a creature, for you have confessed that after the Father, you adore the Son, who is necessarily posterior and was created by His own Father." But the martyr, silencing the senseless mouth of the one who, in idolatrous drunkenness, worshipped many sons and gods born at different times—as numerous as the fables demand—said: "Consider, O judge, that God is begotten timelessly and without beginning, for He is the Word and the splendor, and He cannot be counted among the creatures, because a creature is not a progeny." Let the Arians be rebuked by these words, and let them know that their thoughts are foreign to the faith of the martyrs. Defeated on this point, the judge turned to torture. After cruelly scourging the righteous man, he heard him swear that he felt no pain from these mistreatments. Then, when he ordered him to be torn apart with torture hooks, he heard the same heroic words, even as the martyr was completely flayed. The judge then ordered this valiant man to be hung on the gallows. And since the collarbone (κλείς) had already been broken by the violence and the other bones had fallen from their natural joints, the senseless judge said to him: "Sacrifice to the gods." But the sufferer, feeling no pain, affirmed that he was not suffering. Thus, in his madness, the judge dared with insane commands to surpass

the limits of nature. He ordered that while the martyr was suspended in the air, his palm be opened, a burning coal with incense (θυμίαμα) placed in it, and an altar erected beneath him—so that if he turned his hand, he would be seen as having offered incense to the demons. But it was easy to say to him: "How can it be, O foolish one, that the flesh does not feel the sufferings of the flesh? Even if he had tilted or withdrawn his hand while it burned, this act would not have been an accusation (κατηγορία) against his will, just as no one could say he had made libations to the demons because his body's blood, flowing against his will, had fallen on the altar. For martyrdom promises the inflexible and valiant stance of the soul, not the impassibility of the flesh. That is why He who instituted these sacred combats (ἀγών) said: “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul”." Yet, since the martyr was instructed that the good would be corrupted with the evil, he made the perversity of this command the limit of his patience. He kept his hand in an unyielding position, and thus it was gradually destroyed, unconquered by the coal.

Let us learn from this unshaken hand to have a sound, firm, and unwavering spirit. What will those say on the day of judgment who, not only in spirit but also by hand, have renounced piety (εὐσέβεια) and subscribed to blasphemous doctrines (δόγματα)? Let us pray that this valiant hand of the martyr—the hand that crowns—may grant the Church every visible spiritual blessing. For it is full of countless goods, having achieved its own martyrdom apart from the rest of the body. This short summer night, O our father, has given you this honor in brief. For the winter night of the holy Forty Martyrs allows us to delight freely in their combats (ἀγών) and to give lengthy homilies. If by your prayers you lighten our cares and grant us daily rest, perhaps we too will be fit for longer and more solemn spiritual commentaries, more pleasing to you, for the glory of Christ our God and Savior. To Him be praise, honor, and power forever. Amen.

**HOMILY 74 DELIVERED ON THE FRIDAY OF THE WEEK FOLLOWING PENTECOST, A DAY OF FASTING ACCORDING TO CUSTOM, ON THE READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES WHERE IT IS SAID: "PETER AND JOHN WENT UP TO THE TEMPLE AT THE HOUR OF PRAYER, THE NINTH HOUR, AND A MAN LAME FROM HIS MOTHER'S WOMB WAS CARRIED THERE..." (ACTS 3:1-2).**
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After ascending to the temple with Peter and John at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour, tell me, should we remain silent? How could the lame man, who leaps and praises God through the word, not reproach our silence? For a time, he could not walk on his own two feet; he was carried by others and placed at the Beautiful Gate. He truly made it beautiful, for by his appearance, he cried out that prayer, making the entrance into temples seem beautiful and dear in the eyes of God through the gift of almsgiving. It shines forth and serves as a path for those who enter, just as the lack of charity, hidden in darkness, renders steps uncertain and useless, even if the walker is adorned with all other virtues or the lamp of virginity. This is what the five foolish virgins signify: though illuminated by the radiant beauty of purity, they were extinguished and darkened by their lack of charity. They did not enter with the bridegroom, for the door of the spiritual chamber was closed to them. Thus, it seems this lame man also asked Peter and John for help of this kind, showing that mercy and charity toward the needy are necessary even for those who resemble them in virtue when they enter into prayer.

If you have come here with such a disposition and have extended a charitable hand to the poor, you have truly ascended to the Beautiful Gate and have not made this ascent a lie. For even Peter could not say, "I have no silver or gold" (Acts 3:6), and reject the request of the lame man without first renouncing what he had—his nets, his small boat, and his fishing rods. He said to Jesus, "Behold, we have left everything and followed you" (Matt. 19:27). For even one who has little is still obliged to extend a hand to the poor according to their ability.

Let no one say to me, "I cannot suppress my needs or treat them harshly." First, even if you treat them harshly—for "the violent take the kingdom of heaven by force" (Matt. 11:12)—you will do nothing foolish. Instead, you will act wisely,

purchasing such a treasure at the cost of a little violence. Second, He who imposes this violence will also consider it, and in time, He will grant you consolation in return. God is not unjust to forget your works and the love you have shown for His name (Heb. 6:10), as Paul exclaims. When you see your servant striving beyond his strength to fulfill his master's commands, do you not seek to give him rest as one who is weary? How much more will God not neglect His own creature, whose will is troubled by His law, when they share their possessions with those in need? He says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matt. 6:33), and "Your heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask Him" (Matt. 6:8). If someone forgets these words and is not persuaded by the prophet who says, "Cast your burden on the Lord" (Ps. 55:22), but instead, burdened by many expenses, esteems little what he has and desires what is not his, neglecting the poor—let it be known that we must honor the needs of the poor before our own and not defraud the divine law. This is why the widow's offering of two small coins was considered great—because it touched her own need. She gave all she had to live on (Mark 12:44). Yet even Peter did not suffice with saying, "I have no silver or gold," but added, "What I have, I give you" (Acts 3:6), teaching that we must give to the needy from what we have, whether in word or deed, and regard our possessions not as our own but as shared. Let the giver whisper to himself: "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7). Peter himself gave this warning when he wrote, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: if anyone speaks, let it be as the words of God; if anyone serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies" (1 Pet. 4:10-11).

See what lessons we would have missed if this lame man had been ignored and not touched spiritually. But he does not let me remain silent, for he entered the temple leaping and running, drawing my mind into deep spiritual contemplation. The historical events contain hidden treasures of wisdom surpassing all understanding (Col. 2:3), which, when explored, bring every thought captive to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). This lame man is a figure (typos) of all humanity—the Church gathered from among the Gentiles, who were without God and without hope (Eph. 2:12). When she was dead, Christ made her alive, breaking the power of death through His own death. When she was paralyzed in works of righteousness, enslaved by idolatry and ancestral customs, and stood outside the temple as one unclean, the

apostles raised her by the hand of doctrine. They gave her neither silver nor gold, though her mouth was open for material things. Instead, they opened for her the Beautiful Gate, which is Christ, "the most handsome of men" (Ps. 45:2), who brings the faithful into knowledge of Himself and the Father, saying, "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved" (John 10:9). How did Peter, John, and the apostles raise the Church, prefigured by this lame man? Once, she was lame in the knowledge of God, paralyzed by sin from her mother's womb due to Adam and Eve's transgression, saying, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). What did Peter and John say to her when she was lame yet asking for charity? "Look at us" (Acts 3:4). For doctrine and the health it brings, and for the new uprightness, they said, "It is enough for you to look at us—we who have left all things, taken up the cross, and followed Christ, the Lawgiver." He told us, heavy with sleep and bent toward the earth, as He prepared for His saving passion, "Rise, let us go from here" (John 14:31). For He knew He would bring all men to heaven with Him, saying, "When I am lifted up, I will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32). Leave behind, O lame one, your silver and gold: first, the idols and pagan worship, for "the idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands" (Ps. 115:4), which have feet but do not walk. Cast them away, and you will drive out your paralysis. Second, cast away greed, "the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10). Then, "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk" (Acts 3:6). Taking her by the right hand, they raised her up (Acts 3:7). She could not have performed righteous deeds leading to virtue if the apostles had not strengthened her natural strength with doctrine, giving her their hand. Immediately, the soles of her feet and her ankles were made strong (Acts 3:7), for she set her feet on the rock of faith, and her steps were established (Ps. 40:2).

Not only were her steps made firm, but she leaped and rejoiced in divine thoughts. With the apostles, she entered the temple, remaining steadfast in the depths of sacred contemplation. Now, it is she who holds the apostles close, for the Scripture says of the lame man, a figure of the Church, "He did not leave Peter and John, and all the people ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's" (Acts 3:11). How astonishing it was that she, who once lay helpless, now walked with the apostles under Solomon's portico—filled with the riches of wisdom and contemplation. For Solomon's portico signifies this: "The Lord gave Solomon

wisdom, exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore" (1 Kgs. 4:29). This symbolic Solomon prefigured Christ, the true Solomon—for "Solomon" means "peaceful," and Christ is our peace (Eph. 2:14). He is the essential Wisdom and Power of God (1 Cor. 1:24), in whom are hidden all treasures of wisdom (Col. 2:3). The Church, once unable to walk, was enriched and rejoiced in these things, walking with the apostles. Did the pagan philosophers in their revered portico at Athens ever achieve anything like this? Did they raise such a lame man? No, for they lacked the one true God and the power to say, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk."

After hearing this, you do not seem weary. Yet some are troubled that my words prolong the fast. I say with Paul, "Who makes me glad but the one who is grieved by me?" (2 Cor. 2:2). For I aim to extend the homily so that most of the day passes, fulfilling Scripture: "Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour" (Acts 3:1). They went up—do you hear? Did they descend? Yet you ask us to preach the opposite of what we do. Do you not know that this day calls us to fast, pray, and feed the hungry Christ who stands at the sacred gates? Why do you neglect the spirit of this day and dwell on fleeting moments, rich foods, and tables unworthy of fasting? When will you be a peaceful and charitable hearer of my words? If on feast days you focus on food and gluttony, hurrying home from church, and if on fast days bitterness weighs on you as if the day were a year—when will I speak to you? When will you feed your hungry soul, always murmuring and blaming? I know, as Ecclesiastes says, there is a time for every matter (Eccl. 3:1). I must tell the celebrant how to celebrate rightly, discussing divine words even at the table, rejoicing with trembling (Ps. 2:11), never empty of God’s fear. Where have you seen a general philosophizing about battle formations after the order is given? Or a teacher instructing an athlete after he loses the crown? Or a speaker addressing a feast after it is over? My task is to prepare the soul beforehand, applying it to divine words and thoughts. This is why I labor so, sleepless, my soul melting with my body. You may think I seek your praise for enduring an hour of preaching. But I care not for such praise unless my words profit your soul. I do my duty even if no one listens, for I act not of my own will but under obligation (1 Cor. 9:17). What is my reward? That my conscience does not accuse me. I will say, "I am an unworthy servant; I have only done my duty" (Luke 17:10). I have not neglected even the smallest part of my task. I say this not

to accuse you of negligence—far from it! You accuse me of irregular preaching, saying my voice is too faint for the crowd. But I speak for the three or four who grumble and envy, though the Church grows in the fear of the Lord and multiplies by the Spirit's help (Acts 9:31). Let this suffice for their torment. We pray it may turn to their good, by the grace and love of Jesus Christ, the great God and our Savior, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be praise now and forever. Amen.

## HOMILY 75 ON THE HOLY MARTYR JULIAN. TABLE OF CONTENTS

It seems to me that nothing is more beneficial than praising the martyrs, or rather, I believe that even the mere act of recalling the martyrs often brings a very great advantage, the excellence of which cannot be described. Indeed, when thoughts of disbelief overwhelm the mind—drawing it toward temporary desires, occupying it with the fleeting amusements and pleasures of this world, and distancing it from the enduring and unshakable future goods, sowing uncertainty and causing doubt and hesitation—truly, the eye has not seen these (goods), the ear has not heard them, and they have not risen to the heart of man. But when the thought of these victorious athletes in the sacred contests shines upon him like a radiant sunbeam, it immediately dispels the uncertainty and darkness, making the hope of the resurrection and the kingdom of heaven as clear and bright as midday. For he who strives fully does not strive for the uncertain, especially in struggles of this kind that go as far as shedding blood. This is why Paul, engaged in this holy contest, said: “I run thus, not as if uncertainly; I fight thus, not as one who beats the air” (1 Cor. 9:26). And again: “I press toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14).

If anyone wishes to see in the facts themselves a very precise image of these words and others like them, and to strengthen himself concerning future hope, he will find no better example than the courageous and mighty struggle of Julian. Through him, he can learn the wisdom of God, which the world considers foolishness. For as it is written: “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Cor. 3:19), so too the wisdom of God is considered foolishness by those devoid of understanding. The judge, pressing his demand further, said: "I ask you this: What do the Christians call you? A priest or a deacon?" This wise man in the Lord, wishing to strike the low and human mind of his interrogator with lofty and heavenly humility, replied with wisdom: "Do not think, O judge, that 'priest' or 'deacon' are empty titles. On the contrary, they are realities, honors, and spiritual powers bestowed from above upon those tested and proven in perfection—those whom experience and prescribed trials will confirm, I mean the testimony of men and also the judgment of God. But for me, it is already a great thing not to betray the name of Christian." Since the judge lacked all understanding and judgment to respond to these wise words, he cried out unreasonably: "Sacrifice to the gods!"

What then did this servant of reason and athlete of faith answer to such folly? "By confessing once that I am a Christian," he said, "I have already given my answer. For how could one who is a Christian sacrifice to those he does not believe to be gods? The name of Christian is opposed to polytheism. Moreover, I declare and affirm that you yourself err—not with your tongue, but rather with your mind—by naming many gods when there is only one true God, who created this visible world and placed man at its head as a king." When the judge could not bear this reproach, mingled with both mockery and wisdom, he threatened him with the emperors' decree and the necessity it imposed. He called him a disputatious man and labeled his courageous stance for piety as utter madness. But when he heard him reply: "For me, the emperor, the lawgiver, and the judge is the one true God, who did not deliberate over you, ephemeral judge, nor over the emperors, your peers, nor over the gods of stone," he ordered him to be stretched on the rack.

After investigating the family of the righteous man and finding him enrolled in the Senate, he admonished him to be ashamed of his nobility, now debased and condemned to torture, scorn, and the disgrace of dishonor. Among the soldiers of the higher authority, there were also several who attested to the nobility of his lineage, while others pitied his age and begged him to have compassion on himself, as if he had been deceived. The martyr, lifted slightly above the ground and covered with incurable wounds—any one of which could have been fatal, for he was struck like a bull by butchers—yet soared in spirit above the clouds, despised these men as idle talkers, silenced them, and commanded them to recognize their own condition: that they were under authority and not leaders. Then he said to the judge: "I know only one nobility: intimacy with God. It is always alive because it descends genealogically from the living Christ, who became the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). What makes this nobility most just and true is the practice of virtues and likeness to the good. For nobility consists chiefly in freedom from shameful and despicable passions. How can you call my pious fear folly when you urge me toward evident madness? Is it not madness to sacrifice to blind and deaf idols? What greater thing will they grant me, once honored, than their likeness? And if I resemble them, I will surely be mad, as their own words attest. It is wisdom, then, to regard such gods as enemies, whose peaceful and placid nature is the cause of their senselessness. Learn from what you see in me, according to the Apostle Paul’s definition, that Christianity is faith working

through love (Gal. 5:6). For if we did not have invincible love and charity for Him in whom we believe, we would not endure such pain and suffering." While the martyr spoke thus, the one who had inflicted wounds all over his body ordered him to be struck on the soles of his feet, seeing that they alone had escaped torment, being hidden near the ground and not a visible part of the body. Having exhausted this torture and finding no other means, the judge, like a madman, abandoned the body that had fought and turned his assault on the soul. He sought to seize the martyr's thoughts like a bodily limb, to block the source from which flowed abundant streams of courage and contempt for fleshly suffering. He commanded his servants to force open his mouth and pour in wine, sacrificial meat, and impure libations.

After this, the fool thought he had conquered the invincible athlete. The righteous man, mocking his lack of understanding, said: "You forget that you are attacking the weak. Until now, you have fought with my body, but you have not taken my soul—nor will you ever take it. For the soul's defeat lies in willing something contrary to the law, so that what it does not will remains unassailable, soaring above every invention of torment. Just as it is impossible for you to seize the heavens while standing on earth, so too you cannot seize the soul's freedom—or rather, the heavenly spirit—without its consent. But my lips have not been defiled, as you believe, O infamous and spiritually blind one. They are merely intermediaries, instruments of virtue as well as of evil. For if the mind, overcome by fear of torture, willingly accepts to eat these impure things, the taste becomes the servant of evil, and the lips are likewise conquered with the mind. But if the spirit remains steadfast, the taste remains undefiled. What one does not will cannot defile, even if one's lips are forcibly smeared with blood and flesh. And even if the lips touch flesh, they have not truly touched it if they did not will it. No man has power over our will apart from our own mind. Why then do you weary yourself, O judge, seeking what cannot be done or achieved?" Enraged by these words, the judge ordered him to be mercilessly scourged with hard leather straps, inflicting incurable wounds.

When all these kinds of wickedness were exhausted, the judge resorted to another ruse. He sought to shame the martyr, as a servant of vainglory, with a vile and contemptible invention: he ordered his servants to carry him on their shoulders like

a child going to school, to strip the athlete naked, and to strike him with a strap more suited to killing than punishing a child—and not just one strap, but many. But the martyr, his spirit wholly fixed on Christ, said: "Unknowingly, O Marcian, you have helped me fulfill the Lord's command. By your invention, I have been converted according to the Gospel and have become like a little child, and I shall surely enter the kingdom of heaven. For He who said, "Truly I tell you, unless you turn and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3), is truthful. I will remember the holy Scriptures more than these wounds, like a very young child, and I am ready for the other assaults of the contest." When the valiant Julian had spoken these and even more excellent words and endured suffering, he was sent to the prison of Flubias, a city in the province of Cilicia. The judge threatened to take him to other cities to mock him foolishly and display the most cruel tortures. The martyr replied with firm resolve: "This perfidious invention of yours will also turn against you. For in every city, a written monument of my valiant triumph will rise, proclaiming loudly that it is Christ who fights my contest." After these words, they set out again for Anazarba. The judge employed the same methods, and Julian traversed anew the course of patience with fresh steps. One approached with his wiles as if toward a tower, while the other stood firm, strong, and unshaken. The judge threatened him with tortures through the wounds he inflicted, and the righteous man cried out: "Add, if you wish, bonds, fire, and the sword. Fill your belly with my flesh and satisfy yourself, for your treatments will stop here and not reach my soul." These words further inflamed the judge's anger. Drunk in his mind, he sought to wield weapons against the martyr's soul. He ordered that the impure libation and sacrificial victim be forcibly poured into his mouth, as before. The athlete replied: "Do you know what you are doing, O senseless one? By your actions, you reveal the weakness of your inventions. If pouring a libation into my mouth once sufficed for my defeat, you have what you sought. Why trouble yourself in vain for the same end a second time? If the first attempt failed, the second is equally futile. For the soul's refusal of the will is a rampart that repels all defilement. You yourself know well that if I will it, I am already taken, but if I do not will it, I will never be taken. When you say that Palladius and Antoninus obeyed you, it is because you persuaded them to sacrifice to demons, and thus you conquered them. But you have not persuaded me, and rightly I say: You have not conquered me. Cease fighting against my soul. Do not overstep the limits of your weakness, and do not deceive yourself. Consider

beforehand what you will say, and do not speak rashly and thoughtlessly. Who would not laugh to hear you command sacrifice to Apollo, when this god bears the name of destruction and by his very name cries to those who approach him: 'Flee destruction!'? For Apollo, the author of destruction, cannot save without betraying his name." Seeing his firmness and constancy, the judge declared that the righteous man was persecuted by a demon. To this, the martyr replied: "Since I am a Christian, I have no demons; on the contrary, I am the adversary of demons."

Unable to endure this wise contempt for false gods, the judge departed for Aegae, another city in Cilicia. As Julian was led to these various places, he did not turn his mind from the heavenly Jerusalem. When all these tortures were exhausted, the judge, arrogant in his threats, promised to inflict incurable wounds upon him. The martyr, shattering his pride like a drop of water, calmly said: "He who endured these harsh trials has said: “He will terrify with threats” (Job 41:25). Yet rise, be carried by the wind, soar with threats, fly through the air. Julian awaits you below, and when he enters the contest, he will show you that you are beneath him. For He who crowns the victory is in heaven, higher than your threats." Believing these words to be facts rather than mockery—for he had seen proof in Julian’s previous contests—the judge forgot his threats and devised another, more cunning and wicked scheme to soften even a soul of diamond. He summoned the martyr’s mother, commanding this human creature to persuade her son, hoping that nature would conquer him where the pain of torture had failed, bending him through parental pity. But the strong woman, truly the martyr’s mother, mocked the judge’s order. With wise words, like a good general, she exhorted her son to courage: "My son Julian, I have shared with you the knowledge of the holy Scriptures. Obey me and save yourself." What shall I praise in these words? Their greatness or their simplicity? Their clarity or their depth? By merely recalling the Scriptures, she gave him extensive instruction, saying: "Do not be ashamed of the teaching you have received. You are fighting the good fight. This is why I reminded you of the Scriptures. If you do not use them now, what profit will you later gain from what you have learned? Look to the saints recorded in the Scriptures, and yearn for the trial they endured in suffering. For you were taught so that you might yearn for it." The wise son, understanding his mother’s admonition—which deceived the judge’s lack of wit, for he crudely took her words "save yourself" to mean "do not perish in torture, but abandon the contest"—answered with feigned irony and

solemn wisdom: "Mother, tend to your affairs and defend yourself as you wish. For I will tend to mine." The wise woman—for I will not cease to call her wise—replied to the judge: "You see the child is stubborn and very difficult. Grant me three days to win him over with admonitions." The judge gladly granted her request. O holy upbringing! O spiritual kinship! O pious formation! Who would say these courageous souls did not endure many martyrdoms, not just one?

But let us see how this pious mother, filled with love for God, used these three days for admonition. How? As reality showed. For she fought the contest alongside her son, proving so strong in suffering that the judge despaired, released her, and condemned Julian to the sack and wild beasts after his many tortures. The impure judge ordered him sewn into a sack with wild beasts and thrown into the sea. The sea, receiving this sacred burden, carried Julian's body to Cilicia. After sanctifying this temple with a member of his own body, he looks mercifully upon our city, standing like a mighty rock before its gates. He heals the sick, guards the healthy, comforts the afflicted, and especially aids those in distress before tribunals. He inspires fear and respect in judges, having received this honor from God for his many trials. Let those who take unlawful pleasure in spectacles of beasts be shamed by Julian's sack and beasts. Let mothers remember the martyr's strong mother and teach their children what is good and pleasing to God. Let all attend to their salvation, for this is why we commemorate the martyrs—for the glory of Christ, to whom be glory and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

**HOMILY 76 WHEN, ACCORDING TO CUSTOM, THE COMMEMORATION AND SUPPLICATION FOR ALL THE POOR AND STRANGERS WHO HAVE BEEN BURIED IN THE (PLACES) CALLED "KOIMETERIA," THAT IS TO SAY, WHO RECEIVE ALL, AND WHO ARE STILL BURIED THERE NOW, WAS BEING CELEBRATED. AS VERY MANY OF THE (FAITHFUL) HAD NOT COME, THE HOMILY WAS DELIVERED LATER.** TABLE OF CONTENTS

Looking at the wickedness of the present time and the progress of sins, because people are preoccupied with bodily pleasures and despise the care of the soul, and, to speak briefly, the whole path of piety (εὐσέβεια), I have resolved to remain silent and to recall my spirit within myself. It truly needs cultivation, for it produces many thorns that must be cut down daily by fasting, by vigils, by prayer, and by the other painful remedies of penance and ascetic exercises; for it is with great difficulty that one can thus restrain the violence of the flesh. But while producing these reflections and looking at myself, as I have said, and reflecting on this (word): “Guard your heart with all diligence,” as it is written, the word of a prophet cries out to me with a reproach: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel! Do the shepherds not feed themselves? It is not the sheep that the shepherds feed.” Another prophet also accuses the silence of the priests of killing men and, because they do not instruct, of hiding the path of what must be done: “The priests have hidden the path, they have killed Shechem, because they have made intimacy.” Such is the servant who received the talent and buried it in the ground; he heard the terrible sentence: “Cast this useless servant into the outer darkness: there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” And the prophet Amos, as if in a kind of anger, rebukes a silence of this kind, which is very deadly, saying: “On that day, says the Lord, many shall fall; in every place I will spread silence!” It is therefore necessary for me, lest I be seen as feeding myself instead of you, hiding the doctrinal path of what is useful and keeping a silence that causes ruin and death, to say what has pained me and what restrained my voice, so that I may sing with groaning like the prophet David: “I was mute and humbled, I kept silence from good words, and my sorrow was renewed.” What would one say, indeed, when, while the dance and the spectacle of horses and wild beasts prosper and, like the course of a river, attract a vast and endless crowd, the crowd in the church dwindles and withers like a flower? And to such an extent that, before the five days that have just passed, when

the most important supplication and commemoration of piety (εὐσέβεια) was being celebrated—to which everyone should have rushed and hurried—we saw, so to speak, not one of the (faithful) who are part of the people, but only ourselves alone counted in the divine offices, celebrating and being celebrated, leading ourselves rather than others, intoning the prayers of supplications, responding to them, and fulfilling every function without ornament and in a ridiculous exterior. But let us also see what was the cause of this supplication and solemnity. It is the commemoration of the poor and strangers who, over the long span of time up to this day, have ended their lives, slept the last sleep that none can oppose, rested in a single and common tomb as in an inn (πανδοχεῖον), and returned to the earth the flesh formed from dust, united to a rational soul and created in the image of God.

Let us not only see the exterior (σχῆμα) of this commemoration but examine also the spirit within it. For those who from the beginning made its celebration the object of a law (νόμος) knew clearly that every commemoration of those who have fallen asleep in Christ rises to the resurrection and the life that is awaited, and that Christ died not for these or those but for all men, and He rose for all, since He extends His care to all as the Creator of the universe. Having thoughts befitting their own Lord and proclaiming by the very facts the common profit of divine help, they signified and decreed that the commemoration of all those deprived of kinship (ὁμογενεία) and fleshly friendship would be celebrated at once, seeing this gathering that Paul regarded when he said: “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian nor Scythian, slave nor free; but Christ is all and in all.” We ought, therefore, first to come in crowds to this ceremony because of the community of nature and to render to the holy burial of those who have departed the grace that others will later render to us; secondly, to be covered with shame by the law (νόμος) of the interpreters of the mysteries of the Churches and by the help of Christ, who died and rose for all, and to reflect also, as is fitting, that He who is honored in the poor and strangers is still Christ, who says: “Whenever you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” And thus we should rise to this very high thought and find that these dead, who are regarded as despised, are honorable by the divine image and honor. For Christ, indeed, the Word of God, the Creator of this universe and the Lord of all, came to us by His advent in the flesh as a stranger and a poor man, because “He came to His own, and His own received Him not,” as the Holy Book says. He became poor

for us, though He was rich, that we might become rich by His poverty; and He became so poor that He cried out: “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head,”—a thing astonishing—nor even the final rest that followed the cross, I mean (the rest) in the tomb. For it was not in His own tomb that He was laid; but Joseph of Arimathea received Him in his own sepulcher as a stranger; and, as He was poor, He wrapped Him in a linen shroud and entrusted Him to the burial that was thus ordained and reached this degree of humility.

Hearing these (words), consider that you have despised not just any dead, but God who suffered in the flesh and willingly for us. Among those who are not entirely insensible, who would not weep, because, while you have deprived yourselves of such goods and bid farewell to divine assemblies, you were ravished and astonished by horses, wild beasts, and the spectacle of laughter and softness? Often I have spoken to you of these (amusements), showing at length how they are exceedingly opposed and odious to God and how they plunge the soul into shameful passions, confirming this further by examples from divine words; yet I have gained no serious advantage. But people run eagerly to these spectacles, with great zeal (even to sweat and strain, so as not to miss the smallest part of this pernicious diversion), while you consider it a trifle even to tread henceforth the threshold of the holy church. I pass over in silence the idleness, gluttony, lust, other pleasures, avarice, and the rest, lest I seem a prophet of misfortunes. For we forget that, by the (acts) we have resumed doing, we sow the seeds of (evils) of which it is intolerable even to hear. May God, therefore, avert these (punishments) in the future; but we will remind you of those of the past. You know that at the time of last winter, threats of such calamities hung over us: the cessation of rains, the drought, the excessive trembling of the earth—not once, but many times—capable of shaking and overthrowing the city and annihilating it with its inhabitants, such as has never been known (to men), the madness and fury of demons that led all ages and yet was an object of amusement for some by deceit as by a wager, to draw impure advantage and to work at civil war, trouble, and the plundering of others' goods as in a division of spoils. Remember the public supplications, the tears, and the prayers. Let us employ these (means) beforehand, before the future (misfortunes), and let us not wait for the trial of evils from which He who loves men has snatched and delivered us, lest the divine word be fulfilled

upon us: “When He slew them, then they sought Him,” and that other word spoken by another prophet: “I struck you with blight and mildew; yet you did not return to Me,” and again: “I sent among you a pestilence after the manner of Egypt; I slew your young men with the sword, while your horses were taken captive; I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils in My anger; yet you did not return to Me, says the Lord.” Perhaps “we have recalled these” words in their time? But besides these misfortunes with which we were threatened, (God) has also brought upon us the attack and horde of barbarians who harassed the territories of our neighbors and made an unspeakable slaughter of both youth and old age and of men who cultivated the earth. Because of these (dead), I must keep in mind the words of Our Lord, who speaks thus in the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλιον): “Do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish!”

Do not despise, indeed, the riches of divine goodness, and do not say as one of the wise who wrote in the divine questions: “I have sinned, and what has happened to me? For the Lord is patient. Do not be without fear about the atonement, to add sin to sin. Do not say: 'His mercy is great; He will forgive the multitude of my sins'; for mercy and wrath are with Him, and His anger will rest on sinners. Do not delay to turn to the Lord, and do not postpone it from day to day; for suddenly His wrath will come, and in the time of vengeance you will perish.” It is known beforehand that one must fear the uncertain and the misfortunes that “often” happen in this world, and always “be in terror and dread and prepare”. But for me, my mind has turned to another, more terrible uncertainty. What will those who are attached and bound to dancing do, after the limits of life have ended, when death falls upon them and, unforeseen, they are led to the infallible tribunal (βῆμα) of the Judge, while their soul is in softness, bearing within it the images (εἰκών) and imaginations (φαντασία) of shameful love, seized by the demons to whom these (representations) are pleasing, deprived of the help of angels, and remaining with these images (εἰκών) and imaginations? For souls are, so to speak, immutably clothed, as with a garment, in evil qualities or thoughts, as also in good ones. Let all those women who do not blush to climb the mountain and watch what happens at the theater (θέατρον) hear this as well; for it is a thing dear and worthy of prayer that a woman be chaste, and even more so when she takes precautions, shutting herself in her house and going to church, much more when she sees these

iniquitous (spectacles). That is why the Ecclesiastic said: “I found one man among a thousand, but I did not find a woman among them all.” Thus, suddenly, all the inhabitants of this city have become mad and furious; even those who once sang in the square now sing “demonic and impure songs; they have walked according to the thoughts of their evil heart, and they have gone backward and not forward,” as Jeremiah says. Suppose you wanted and pleased to go to the spectacles; why do you turn away completely from the assemblies of the churches? That is why Paul, writing to the Romans, said: “I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.” For it was necessary, I say, that at my first word you should choose the slavery of God, which consists in righteousness and the practice of virtue, and desire the good; but because, having sunk into the passions of the flesh, you are weak for this choice that suits you, I speak, as it were, in human terms—that is, (I do not submit to you) a decision of God's judgment, but a mortal thought arising from human actions. Transfer the love and zeal you show for sin to God and the practice of righteousness, to yourselves “if you are judged”. Let God have what is fitting rather than sin; let Him not be outweighed by it, and do not make the inclination of the balance lean and turn to that side alone. For in this way, by doing so and giving yourselves to sin without measure, you clearly show, according to the word of the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον), that “no one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other.” We must therefore honor and serve God and despise Satan. For it is blasphemy to say that one will overturn the order (τάξις), and it is even greater iniquity to do so.

I know well that by saying this I grieve many among you; I too, know well, would like to address to you (words) that encourage, delight, and suit you. But if, when you go of your own accord to pleasures and seek evil, I soothe and cover with plaster, “I fear to incur the threat uttered by Ezekiel against the false prophets: "They have led My people astray, saying, 'Peace! Peace!' when there is no peace. They built a wall, and they covered it with plaster. Will it not fall? Say to those who cover it with plaster: It will fall. Rain will come and sweep it away; I will send stones and rocks into their framework, and they will fall; the stormy wind will come and overthrow it. Behold, the wall has fallen. Will they not say to you:

Where is the plaster with which you covered it?” Such are the artisans of evil. Those who, for a momentary pleasure and grace, turn away from what is advantageous to them, are seized, caught, and recaptured by their own ruin. And when wrath comes, those whom pleasure has deceived will repent and flee from him who applied them to pleasure as from a corrupter. We must therefore give these useful warnings, and even cause sorrow if it is truly necessary. For the sorrow that is according to God produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted: either it brings back those who have erred from their error, or it makes those who stand firm unshakable. That is why I have delivered this homily. For it belongs to me to instruct and remind; but it is Christ's part to persuade the hearers, to strengthen and confirm them. To Him be praise, glory, and power, as to the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

**HOMILY 77 THAT THE EVANGELISTS DID NOT CONTRADICT EACH OTHER IN ANY WAY WHEN THEY TOLD THE FACTS IN DIFFERENT WAYS WHEN RELATING TO RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, OUR GOD AND OUR SAVIOR, FACTS WHICH WE READ ON THE NIGHT OF EVERY SUNDAY.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

All, so to speak, approve the reading of the sacred Gospels that we have established, specifically for Sunday night, concerning the resurrection of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Some acknowledge, it is true, that they gain benefit from it, but, feeling that they understand it too infrequently in some way, they declare that they are troubled by it, as the evangelists do not say the same things about the same events, but rather things that contradict each other and that tend to lead the listener more towards misunderstanding. Indeed, who should we believe? Matthew, who wrote that the resurrection occurred 'late on the Sabbath,' John, who recounted that the same event took place in the morning while darkness still reigned, or Luke and Mark, who described the same moment as, one 'at early dawn,' the other 'at sunrise'?

To resolve the problem presented to us and other questions arising from examining the text of Scripture, we must, despite our weakness, be encouraged by the God who is risen and offer an explanation that is clear. For it is just that the One who has spread the seed of reading and made it grow in the ears of all should also provide answers to the questions it raises. I will attempt to do this and to derive the solution to the questions from the very words of those who raised them.
The sacred authors of the Gospels did not specify that the Lord rose either 'late on the Sabbath,' or when the majority of the night had passed, or at dawn, or when the sun had already cast its rays. There would indeed be a contradiction if the writers had reported that the same event took place not at the same time, but at different times. However, they wrote that the women went to the tomb, sometimes at one moment, sometimes at another, but not at the same time — how would that be possible since they came there on different occasions? — and that all of them heard the angels say similarly concerning the Savior: 'He is risen; He is not here,' without adding when (this took place).

It follows that if the resurrection occurred on that divine night — by the admission and agreement (of all the evangelists) — none of them indicated the hour, which is unknown to everyone except the God who is risen and to the Father — who alone knows the Son, just as He Himself is known by the Son — and to the Spirit, who searches all things, even the depths of God. Matthew, in fact, said that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came *late on the Sabbath* to see the tomb, and that there was a great earthquake; that an angel descended from heaven, whose face was bright as lightning and his clothing as white as snow, to strike fear in the guards with his terrifying appearance — so much so that they nearly perished from fear, unable to withstand his sight — but also to call the women to him with his radiant appearance, instilling confidence in them, as they were naturally prone to fear and timidity, and to announce the resurrection with great joy through his very presence, for this too was why he had been sent. Having then removed the stone, he found that the Lord had risen and had left the tomb, sealed and guarded, in a manner worthy of God, just as He had entered the house while the doors were closed to visit His disciples. This is also why the angel said, 'He is not here, but He is risen,' indicating that the Savior's resurrection had miraculously taken place before the angel's arrival. The resurrection, which the Savior performed as God through His own power after completing His earthly mission, required no assistance from an angel. For if He had needed assistance, the angel would have said, 'See, He is rising,' showing that the event was occurring at that very moment; but since it had already happened beforehand, he said using the past tense: 'He is not here, but He has risen.' This also becomes clear from the fact that the apostles, when preaching the Gospel, said that Christ was *raised by the Father*, making the news easier to accept. But the angel, who was the first to proclaim the resurrection, revealed the power, completely worthy of God, of the One who was risen, by exclaiming: 'He is not here, but He has risen.' To say that He was *raised by the Father*, as I mentioned, accommodated the weakness of the listeners, but it has the same meaning and not another. For how does the Father act? By His own power, of course. And who is the power of the Father? None other than Christ. Christ is indeed the power of God and the wisdom of God. Therefore, Christ raised Himself, even though it is said that He was *raised by the Father*. As for the expression *late on the Sabbath*, it does not refer to the following evening or Saturday's sunset, for Matthew did not use the singular form but used the plural *'ὀψὲ τῶν σαββάτων'* ('late on the Sabbaths'). The Hebrews customarily refer to the entire week as

*'Sabbath'*. Thus, the evangelists say *'the first (day) of the Sabbaths'* when they mean the first day of the *'week'*. Similarly, we commonly express ourselves by calling the second and third days of the *'week'* the second of the *'Sabbaths'* and the third of the *'Sabbaths'*. Matthew, therefore, did not say *'ὀψὲ σαββάτου'* ('late on the Sabbath'), which would mean the evening of Saturday to designate the evening of that day, but *'ὀψὲ τῶν σαββάτων'* ('late on the Sabbaths'), to indicate that it was indeed late and long after the week had ended. This is also, I believe, how we usually say: 'You came *'ὀψὲ τοῦ καιροῦ'* ('long after the time'), *'ὀψὲ τῆς ὥρας'* ('long after the hour'), *'ὀψὲ τῆς χρείας'* ('long after the need'),' to signify not the evening or the time after sunset, but to convey that something happened too late, when it was no longer necessary or timely. In the same way, the expression *'ὀψὲ τῶν σαββάτων'* ('late on the Sabbaths') indicates that it was indeed late, long after the end of the week, when the women arrived at the tomb. Now, each week ends at sunset following Saturday. Therefore, Matthew, in indicating the greatly removed from the moment relative to the end of the week that had passed, and almost commenting on it himself, he added: 'at dawn on the first day of the week.' The night, he says, had passed to the point where it was the time of the crowing of the rooster, which announces the light of the coming day. Thus, it is at this moment, and not in the evening following Saturday, that, ceasing from fasting, we begin to engage in joy. The fact that this practice has spread everywhere supports what we are doing. At this moment, then, Mary Magdalene and her namesake came to the tomb and saw that the angel who had descended from heaven, as we said earlier, had removed the stone and was sitting on it. Invited by him, they saw the place where the Lord had lain, and after receiving the command to go and announce (the news) to the disciples, they quickly left the tomb and ran. While they were running, Jesus met them and said to them, 'Greetings!' Indeed, it was necessary that the women be the first to receive the news of the resurrection from the angel and to see the Lord, and that the first word they heard from His mouth was: 'Greetings!' For it is the woman, the first to lend her ear to the deception of the serpent, who also, contrary to the law, saw the fruit of the tree that had been forbidden to her, and who was condemned to affliction, was therefore the first to hear the good news of the resurrection. That is why the Savior allowed the women to worship Him and touch His feet—the first to detach themselves and distance themselves from [sin]—and He commanded them to share their joy with the disciples. He wanted the woman to become a messenger of joy for men, she who had been a cause of affliction for

Adam, thus healing the harm with good. While they were on their way, as Matthew says, to announce the news to the disciples, some of the guards entered the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. They, after assembling with the elders and holding a council, gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying: 'Tell them: His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep. And if the governor hears of it, we will appease him and keep you out of trouble.' The soldiers, having received the money, did as they were instructed, and this story spread among the Jews to this day." The other Mary—it is fitting to believe that she is the Mother of God, because she did not stay away from the Passion but stood near the cross, as John has recounted—is she to whom it also befitted to announce the joyous news, since she was the cause of joy and had heard those glorious words: 'Hail, full of grace.' Carrying out the Lord's command, she certainly announced the news to the disciples. Indeed, it would not have been permitted that something so wisely arranged and ordained should go unfulfilled.

Doubtless, those who heard the news did not believe it—such is often the case when one hears of exceedingly miraculous events—for if they had believed, they would not have remained inactive. As for Magdalene, who was traveling with the Mother of God and was equally eager to announce the news, she experienced something very human. Just as Peter, who had been arrested by Herod and freed thanks to the angel, automatically released from his bonds, had left the prison and advanced far enough to reach outside the city gates, did not think what was happening was real but believed he was seeing a vision, so too did she. Having seen in the extraordinary magnitude of the miracle something hallucinatory—and as the guards had arrived before her and had begun to plot with the chief priests their slander against the resurrection—certainly noticing that something of this sort was being whispered, she embraced the suggestions of doubt, neglected her message and the command of the Savior, and returned to the tomb in the morning, while darkness still reigned," as John says. "For just as the Lord allowed Thomas, in his doubt, to say: 'Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe,' and as through his indiscreet disbelief and touch, we were strengthened in our faith, believing that Emmanuel was resurrected with the body in which he suffered and rejecting the myths of the Phantasiasts; in the same way, he also allowed Mary Magdalene—who had fallen back into doubt and experienced this sentiment more

readily (than Thomas)—to make the miracle of the resurrection, which surpasses all understanding, more believable through her thorough investigation, as it is well known that it is in the nature of women to be easily deceived belief and all reasoning. Arriving with this spirit of doubt and only seeing that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance of the tomb and (no longer seeing) the angel seated upon it as before, she let herself be overcome by disbelief and thought that the first vision had been merely an illusion and a completely false hallucination. Running to Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, she cried out, saying, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and I don’t know where they have laid him.’ — You see, she had heard something of this nature among the rumors spread overnight among the Jews after the report from the guards, and then she changed her mind and believed that their enemies had removed the stone and stolen Jesus' body to lend credibility to the rumor that the theft was by the disciples. — But Peter and John rose promptly and ran to the tomb. For what was being said, to prevent them from believing in the resurrection, was not implausible but rather believable and aligned with Jewish malice. They acted without fear, for it was calm, even though it was still ‘dark’ and God had filled them with confidence. Upon their arrival, they found clear evidence of the resurrection. Indeed, they saw in the tomb the linen cloths lying on the ground; this would not have been the case if the body had been stolen. First of all, thieves are inclined to rob the dead, and secondly, to carry out the theft quickly so as not to be caught and suffer severe punishment. Now, John writes something like this about Christ's body: ‘They wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom among the Jews.’ How could it not have been a burdensome task for thieves to undo the wrappings and strip the body of the cloths that were adhered to it, difficult to tear away and prone to tearing before being removed? For they had been bound together with a mixture of aloes and myrrh that Nicodemus had brought. But the face cloth that had been on his head, which was not with the linen cloths on the ground but folded separately in another place, showed no signs of disturbance, as would have been the case if thieves had stolen the body. Indeed, where would the thieves have found the time and the necessary security to roll up carefully the face cloth that covered the head and set it aside? This detail also clearly established the truth of the resurrection, while at the same time revealing a divine mystery. The head symbolizes divinity, according to the Scripture that says, ‘God is the head of Christ.’ Matters related to divinity remain, even after the Incarnation, as if veiled

and inexplicable, while lower matters—those of the Incarnation and the time spent on earth among humans, symbolized by the linen cloths—have been explained and untangled by us as far as possible. Having seen all this, Peter and John believed, for they looked not merely with a straightforward gaze, but with an elevated, apostolic understanding. The tomb was indeed filled with light, so that even though it was night, they beheld what was inside in a dual way: with their senses and with their spirit. For if the righteous always possess light, as Scripture says, how much more does the God of the righteous possess it. ‘They did not yet believe,’ as John states, ‘for they did not yet understand what is written in the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead.’ And indeed, they knew that he would rise unbelief, the Savior having often told them beforehand, but they did not know it in the sense of being persuaded by the Scripture and by the prophecies announced there—which could not fail to come true—but as men whose faith was still wavering. The fact that Jesus rose without the grave clothes first establishes that He will no longer be known ‘according to the flesh’ and will no longer need food, drink, or clothing, even though, during His earthly ministry, He voluntarily submitted to these things, sharing in our nature. It also signifies the return of Adam to his original state, when he was naked in Paradise and was not ashamed. Furthermore, as God, even when incarnate, He was clothed in divine glory, for He is the One who, as the prophet David says, ‘clothes Himself with light as with a garment.’ But Peter and John, convinced by what they saw, returned to their homes and said nothing to Mary. For she had fallen into unbelief.' The One who is wise ensured that she would be convinced more by sight than by hearing. So she stood outside the tomb, weeping. Bending down, she saw two angels, dressed in garments that made them appear white and shining, seated—one at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been laid. Though she should have turned her lamentation into joy, she continued to weep so that the angels spoke to her, almost as if reproving her, saying: 'Woman, why are you weeping?' This was as if to say, 'These tears are tears of a woman, not of a rational person. Indeed, is there room for lamentation after such a vision?'

But Mary, still gripped by the same unbelief—for the doubt persisted so that its gradual increases, aimed at encouraging faith, would ultimately drive it out—answered them, saying, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.' And having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus

standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. This was partly because her sight was clouded by her tears, as if veiled, and partly because Jesus was withholding recognition at that moment, so that He would not be recognized by her. That’s why He said, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, thinking He was the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' — Perhaps she was not mistaken in assuming that Jesus was a gardener. In reality, He was the true and immortal cultivator of the paradise, restoring in the garden of the tomb, as in the original paradise, the woman who had, through deceit, led Adam—the first gardener—astray. All these things were so mysterious and full of divine and sublime meaning! But when Mary had spoken these words, overcome with intense passion in her search for the body, and had turned away, almost about to leave, He, who penetrates to the division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart, saw that she had been sufficiently tested. With a single word, He cast out her unbelief and sharpened her vision so that she might recognize Him, saying simply, in a way only He could, such that she would turn back: 'Mary.' And immediately, she turned and said, 'Rabboni' that is to say, 'Master.' She wanted to grasp His divine feet, but He said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.' Though you have already received this privilege, He said, that you touched me along with the other Mary, that you adored me, that you grasped my feet—you’ve allowed yourself to fall into doubt, showing disregard by failing to have any elevated thoughts about me, still searching around the tomb for the one who now dwells above with the Father in a divine manner. And now, do not touch me, if, with the same mindset, you think I still need to ascend to the Father. For I have not yet ascended, according to you, to my Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' Since I have, in the flesh, become the firstborn among many brothers, it is not for myself but for you, my brothers, that I will now ascend bodily to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. For if He had not first been called 'my God,' after seeing in me the innocence of human nature—free from sin, as was intended at the beginning of humankind—then He would not be called your Father and your God, given that you had distanced yourselves from Him. And so Paul, writing to the Hebrews, said, 'For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear on our behalf in the presence of God.'

Mary Magdalene then went to announce to the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had spoken these things to her. Upon arriving and having announced all this, she found Mary, the mother of James, Joanna, and the other women who were with them, who were hurrying to the tomb with their prepared spices and perfumes. This was just as darkness had retreated and dawn had just begun, meaning it was distinctly separate and just starting, as Luke says. She joined them and went along with them. Due to the fervor of her love for Jesus, she appeared to be leading them, and she is mentioned first among the evangelists because of this particular distinction. She wanted them also to be convinced about the resurrection, not merely by what they had heard from her and the other Mary, but by the sight that would appear before their eyes or by the appearance of angels. And she accompanied them, prudently keeping silent and she said nothing, although they were uncertain, but waited for the testimony of the facts, convinced that a particular certainty would be provided to them by their own eyes. After seeing that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, they entered and did not find the body of Jesus. While they were perplexed, they saw two men in dazzling clothes standing beside them, who said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen,' and so on. And having returned from the tomb, as Luke says, they announced all these things to the eleven and to all the others. But as they were many, they were rather skeptical, mocked the news, and rejected it. For, as Luke adds, their words seemed like nonsense to them, and they did not believe the women. As a result, Peter, rising up in their presence, somewhat disturbed and shaken by their unbelief, also ran to the tomb, bent down, and saw once again the linen cloths that were on the ground, which he had already looked at more attentively when he had entered the tomb. Content with simply peering in and seeing nothing else, Peter left, struck with admiration and astonishment at what had happened, praising the One who had orchestrated it all. And again, just as she had accompanied the others at the first light of dawn—Joanna and her companions, who had brought the perfumes and spices they had prepared before the Sabbath—Mary Madeleine hurried, without delay, filled with the same disposition of mind, along with Salome—who, though mentioned later, had purchased some spices after the Sabbath—together with Mary, the mother of James, so that it seemed they had collectively bought the perfumes. Having traveled together, they were indeed attributed, as a common action, all that had been accomplished. And very early on the first day of the week, they went again to

the tomb. The word ‘again’ indeed appears in the most accurate manuscripts, indicating that beyond the arrivals that had already occurred, this particular arrival of the women at the tomb also took place. Explaining the words ‘very early in the morning,’ Mark added: ‘when the sun had risen.’ And he continues, ‘They were saying among themselves, ‘Who will roll away the stone from the entrance of the tomb for us?’ And when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, for it was very large.

Salome was necessarily embarrassed, since she had not yet come to the tomb at all and was addressing these words to the women walking with her. The others kept silent in the way we have indicated earlier. Having merely looked up, they answered her with their gaze. The stone, in fact, appeared to be rolled away before their eyes. But since they had all traveled the same route together, Scripture reports that they were all perplexed and spoke to each other. If we focus on the truth of the story and the nature of things, and if we examine who it belonged to be perplexed, we will recognize that it was implausible that the women, who had already often seen the stone rolled away, would be concerned about it. But since among the women mentioned by Mark is the person of Salome, who knew nothing about the situation, the statement is undeniably true (since we place it in her mouth). It was also not natural that they would say, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us?’ because the Jews had sealed the tomb entrance and set up a guard of soldiers, and the third day had arrived. Because the impure had said to Pilate, ‘We remember that this deceiver said, while he was still alive, "After three days I will rise again."’ If the women knew about the miracle performed by the angel, the removal of the stone, and if they knew that the guards had fled, terrified, how could they be in doubt about the removal of the stone? On the other hand, if they were unaware of the miracle, they should have considered the guard's post and not imagined they could open the tomb. But, as I said, Salome knew nothing of this, and the words in question were hers alone. Indeed, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, having sat opposite the tomb, as Matthew recounts, and having remained there attentively, had seen the seals of the Jews and the guard of soldiers. Salome and the two Marys, when they entered, saw a young man sitting on the right, dressed in a white robe, and they were all struck with fear: Salome, because she lacked understanding and was in too human a disposition, the others, because they continually went to the tomb and thus seemed to inquire about the resurrection more than they should

have. For this reason, a young man appeared to them, who was even able to strike them with astonishment and inspire fear with his tall stature, and who mixed joy with fear, thanks to the whiteness of his robe, since it was a feast day and he did not want them to be frozen by terror. And he spoke to them rather sternly, reprimanding them and telling them not to continue manifesting an indiscreet curiosity after having been witnesses of such great things, but to firmly hold to what they had seen. ‘Go,’ he said to them, ‘announce to his disciples and to Peter — to his disciples, because they have often been incredulous; to Peter, because he came twice to the tomb, driven by the same curiosity as you — that he will go before you into Galilee; it is there that you will see him, as he told you,’ when he appeared to you, the women, well after the week, at the dawn of the first day of the week, as Matthew wrote. For it does not seem that he ever told his disciples that he would appear to them after the resurrection in Galilee, unless one were to cite what Matthew and Mark wrote that these words were approximately said by the Savior when they went after the mystic supper to the Mount of Olives, after having sung the hymn: ‘After I am resurrected, I will go before you into Galilee.’ After leaving the tomb, seized with trembling and fear, the two Marys and Salome fled and did not say anything to anyone, for they were afraid, first because the young man inspired them with fear, and secondly because the day was already advancing and the Jews were probably roaming everywhere, eager for carnage.

In the most accurate manuscripts, the Gospel according to Mark ends with the words: ‘For they were afraid.’ In some versions, the following words appear: ‘Having risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons.’ This passage seems to present a contradiction with what was previously said. The time of night when the Savior was resurrected being unknown, how can it be said that he was resurrected in the morning? But the passage presents no contradiction if we know how to read it properly. For it is important to punctuate with intelligence: having risen, one can add: 'He appeared in the morning, on the first day of the week, first to Mary Magdalene,' so that the words 'having risen' are reported, in agreement with Matthew, in the past tense, and the words 'in the morning' are linked to the appearance that manifested to Mary, who first saw the Lord with the other Mary, and then again alone. The morning is, in fact, the entire interval of time that follows the crowing of the cock.

As the women came to the tomb at four different moments, there were thus as many arrivals of women, and the Holy Spirit ensured that each Evangelist derived a moment. Matthew spoke of the women who came to the tomb very late after the week, and told of an angel descending from heaven to remove the stone; John wrote that Mary Magdalene arrived alone, in the darkness, before dawn, and saw two angels inside the tomb; Luke wrote that other women came at the same moment as dawn, and Mark that another woman arrived at the moment of sunrise, accompanied by some women who had already gone to the tomb. The first [women] saw two men standing before them, the last [women] saw a young man sitting at their right. All (angels, men, and young man) were dressed in white robes. It follows that by gathering in the order of the moments what has been written by each Evangelist, one can compose a single harmonious account of the entire story, as if one person, and not several, had written the whole. If the four Evangelists had mentioned a single arrival of the women at a single moment and had not said that the same angels had appeared to them, or if, after speaking of the same appearance, meaning the same vision, they had said it took place at different times without specifying a single time, the account would deserve the reproach of contradiction. But if the moments and the people are different, if the appearances are not the same—God having wanted to make the incredible miracle of the resurrection believable in many ways—and if what one Evangelist has not reported, another one has, then the story becomes harmonious and credible. Another person recounts how the entire narration is pure and free from any criticism?

As there are many Marys mentioned in the Gospels, we must understand that there are three in total, which John summarizes by saying: 'Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother and His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene.' We believe, in fact, that it is the Mary, called the mother of James and Joseph in the other Gospels, who is the Mother of God and not another. Just as, in the divine economy and to keep the divine conception hidden and not disclosed to the Jewish killers, it was arranged that at the very moment the Virgin was about to be led to the bridal chamber to conceive by the Holy Spirit, Joseph was called the husband of the Virgin and the father of Jesus; in the same way, the Mother of God was called and named the mother of Joseph and James, who were the children of the carpenter Joseph, still young children, born from a previous marriage of his and from a wife who had died earlier. This is why the Jews, in blasphemy against the

Savior, would say: 'Isn't this the son of Joseph? Son of the carpenter? Isn't His mother called Mary, and His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude? This is also why John called her, even while she stood near the cross, the mother of Jesus, in accordance with the truth, since he spoke frankly about the divinity of Jesus, while the other evangelists, very concerned with the economy, called her, according to the economy, the mother of James and Joseph, who were the first and most known children of Joseph. Our explanation clearly shows that thanks to this economy and the belief it had propagated, Mary was able to assist safely in the Passion of the Savior. For if the Virgin had been known by the crowd, the envious Jews would have made her perish. It happens that she is called, in the Gospels, by one of Joseph's children, Mary, mother of James, and Mary, mother of Joseph. Mark calls her the mother of James the Less and of Joseph. In fact, there was another James, the son of Alphaeus, who was prominent because he was counted among the Twelve Apostles, whereas James the Less was not counted among them.

How does the Savior, after having promised His disciples—sometimes through angels, sometimes in person—to show Himself to them when they arrive in Galilee, fulfill His promise by appearing in Jerusalem itself? According to Luke, He appears to the Eleven gathered on the very day of the resurrection; according to John, He appears both on that day and on the eighth day, placing Himself in the midst of them, saying, 'Peace be with you,' and allowing Himself to be touched by Thomas. But this demonstrates the richness of His generosity and His love for mankind, and cannot be accused of lying. In fact, He did not say, 'They will only see Me in Galilee,' and after appearing in Galilee, He did not refrain from showing Himself in Jerusalem, as He had promised—this would have been a lie against His own words. However, He appeared to them, on the one hand, in Jerusalem, when they were locked in a house for fear of the Jews and in need of His encouragement. On the other hand, He fulfilled His promise by appearing to them in Galilee. Both appearances, which truly took place and were motivated by love for mankind, escape all reproach. It seems to me that what is said in Matthew regarding the disciples, namely: 'Go to Galilee, there you will see Me,' has a significant meaning. Indeed, since many appearances were to manifest to them, the promise that Jesus would appear to them on the mountain concerns a more remarkable appearance than the others. He then says to them, with a power worthy of God, when they approached Him and worshipped Him, while some doubted: 'All power has been

given to Me in heaven and on earth.'—The power He possessed naturally, as God, He says He received because He became man by virtue of the divine economy. That is why He also said: 'Glorify Me, Father, with the glory I had with You before the world was.' If He had not had this glory as His own glory in His nature as God, it would have been impossible for Him to receive it as a foreign glory, for God and the Father say through the prophet: 'I will not give My glory to another.'—He then adds the words through which they were to 'catch the whole world' in the net, and which contain the full mystery of religion: 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." He then adds the words that guarantee the fulfillment and realization of these words: "And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." This is why He says: "Go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see Me," alluding, as I mentioned, to this vision as a special and extraordinary vision, which He had indicated to them more extensively earlier with other words that are not recorded in the Gospel writings. If this were not the case, Matthew would not have said: "The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had commanded them to go," because the Lord had promised nowhere in the Gospels to appear on the specific mountain in question. Before appearing to them on the mountain, He also appeared to them on the Sea of Tiberias, which is in Galilee, when they were seven in number: Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples, as John recounts. But it is the mountain where Jesus had previously commanded them to go the command (to be found) which was conveyed by the words: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.' It is, in my opinion, not out of place to say that these words were spoken on the mountain in Galilee and not elsewhere. The word 'Galilee,' in fact, translates into Greek as *χάταχυλιστή* (the rolling from top to bottom); it is also why a wheel is called *γελγέλ*. When spoken by the Savior, as from the top of a high mountain, these words rolled, like a wheel, across the earth, spreading over the entire world, and all were baptized in the nations and in cities in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But the disciples, after hearing these words, did not immediately go to any nation but remained in Jerusalem until Pentecost, awaiting the coming of the Spirit, who visited them in the form of tongues of fire. Appearing to them in this manner and meeting with them on various occasions for forty days, as Luke says at the beginning of the Acts of the

Apostles, He commanded and instructed them telling them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard from My mouth. For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." It is entirely reasonable that He used the expression *not to depart*, meaning not to stray too far or to go too far away, and He did not tell them *not to leave Jerusalem* at all. For how could He have told them that, He who had commanded them to go to Galilee? We must also understand that what is written at the end of the Gospel of Luke: "And it happened that while He blessed them, He was separated from them and was taken up into heaven," as well as what is written in Mark: "The Lord, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat at the right hand of God," took place on the fortieth day, according to what is recounted in Acts. What Mark and Luke briefly stated in their Gospels is developed and explained in the detailed account of the history. Here are the difficulties found in the Gospel readings for Sunday night, which may confuse the unlearned. By explaining them, we have, in a way, settled a debt with you. I blush to say what you, the listeners of these readings, are going to do; I think, in fact, of the friendship with which most of you will run to these spectacles. May the Lord give you the strength to avoid evil, as it is said in the Scriptures, and to do good. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

## HOMILY 78 ON THE HOLY MARTYRS TARACHOS, PROBOS, AND ANDRONICOS. TABLE OF CONTENTS

How can I remain silent, seeing that three martyrs, as if one man, endured a single martyrdom in unison, that they preserved the unity of the spirit through the bond of struggles according to the legislation (νομοθεσία) of the Apostle, and demonstrated it through their deeds, that they clothed themselves like a panoply (πανοπλία) with the sacred words of Paul, not when he writes, but when he arms: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism," and that they perfectly sealed and affirmed that there is also only one martyrdom for this. They are therefore empty and deprived of these words, and they do not partake in the divine grace of the Spirit, those who are not in agreement with themselves but who limp in the thoughts of religion (εὐσέβεια); sometimes they confess and write things concerning religion (εὐσέβεια) and praiseworthy matters, and at other times they foolishly turn to what opposes it; now they do the works of Christ, and now those of the Slanderer; they force themselves to look with one eye toward heaven, and by force they also become weak with the other toward the earth; they are bound and attached to earthly things, even as they pretend to think of heavenly things. We will therefore undertake to consider these martyrs and learn from them to think and speak the same things about the one and same God, and to stand firm in the same things, without being tossed by every wind and again agitated in the opposite direction, and without easily bending like reeds to both sides.

As I have said, these valiant men were three in number, when on one hand the tyrants Diocletian and Maximian persecuted religion (εὐσέβεια), and on the other hand a prefect (ἡγεμών), Maximus, administered justice first in Tarsus of Cilicia and finally in Anazarbus, or rather (μᾶλλον δέ) waged a very harsh battle (ἀγών), as he thought. The first to appear publicly and be questioned about his name confessed that he was a Christian, saying to the unjust judge, as it were: "What you pursue as a crime is for me an ornament and a proper name; the name my parents gave me is metaphorical or common, and it was imposed based on what seemed good to them and not on the facts themselves. But since you seek to learn this (name), I am called Tarachos, not falsifying this appellation at all. For, though I am volatile, I have renounced serving here below; indeed, our weapons as Christians

are not carnal, but they are mighty through God, as Paul says. Therefore, I have willingly cast away my belt like a bond, hearing David sing: 'I have prepared myself and have not been troubled,' as well as other divine words that warn: 'Do not fear what they fear, nor be troubled; sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.' For he who is thus prepared, in turn, spreads trouble among those who imagine they can frighten him, because he possesses within himself the God of confidence who said to his disciples: 'Take heart, I have overcome the world,' and who cries through his prophet against those who do not obey him: 'I am like a trouble to Ephraim and like a goad to the house of Judah.' Do then what you will; for, because of God who is in me, I will be both a goad and a trouble to you. Do not remind me of my white hair and old age as pitiable, for I am youthful in zeal, and do not call the idolatrous error of your emperors the law (νόμος) of our fathers. Our only true father is God, who brought us into existence; therefore, His law (νόμος), and His alone, is the law of a father. For how could those who are not gods, but consist of wood and stone, bear a law (νόμος) that is not foreign to them?" After these words inflamed the judge's anger under the pretext that he insulted the gods and the emperors, he was struck on the neck with many blows, the sight of which those standing near him could not bear. Therefore, they even tried to exhort him to turn away from this foolish conduct and useless chatter, as it seemed to them. But this valiant man wisely said to them: "After I have diligently applied myself to this folly for all these sixty years of my life, would I in a single hour cast away so easily what I have acquired over such a long time?" After saying this and appearing to those who sought to persuade him as incapable of any persuasion, he was ordered by the judge to endure heavier iron chains than before and was led to prison.

Then the second in age was presented, speaking everything without delay and in succession, lest he wait to suffer. He said: "By my divine and sublime name, I am called Christian, and by my human name, Probos; I am Thracian by family (γένος), a commoner (ἰδιώτης) in the world. I disdain the honors of the emperors and yours, O judge, which are against religion (εὐσέβεια), and above all, even your friendship, which distances from God. For I have bought at a great price the right to become a Christian, having despised all that I had—and it was not little—because of the commandment of the Spirit." And saying this, he was bound and stretched out, receiving sudden and numerous blows from oxhide whips like showers of rain. As

the earth was soaked with his blood and those standing around him were stunned and cried out to him: "See this terrible flood and have pity on yourself," he looked at them and said: "I consider this blood as oil that invigorates or as perfume (μύρον); therefore, I am anointed excessively for the battles (ἀγών) and strengthened in my resolve by this fragrance." After receiving similar blows on his stomach and abundantly reddening the earth with his blood, he said only: "Christ, help me." When the prefect (ἡγεμών) said: "If He helps you, He must also deliver you from these tortures," he modestly replied: "I ask Him, in truth, not to avoid suffering, but to endure it; for which of those who strive in the battle (ἀγών), if he is sensible, would ask to be delivered from the battles (ἀγών), so as not to obtain the crown? Do you not know that I have been heard by Christ and helped? And this when I persisted in not obeying, when I was not caught in the traps you thought to set for me, and when the pains of the body made my soul's resolve stronger." Because the judge yielded to these words, he ordered him to be loaded with iron chains, led to prison, and stretched on the four holes of the torture wood.

After Probos, Andronicos entered third. In body, he was a child; in age, he was equal to those who had preceded him in the struggle—a grown man who, according to Paul's words, was striving for the measure of the fullness of Christ's age. Therefore, he demonstrated the same steadfastness, the same boldness (παρρησία), the same words, saying to the prefect (ἡγεμών) what was very new and very true: "Rightly, O Maximus, would you have called our battles (ἀγών) folly if they lacked hope; but if one looks to the resurrection promised by the Savior's word, he will necessarily say with Paul: 'The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'" When the judge was stung by this martyr's philosophy (φιλοσοφία) and sought to prove his words empty, he found them confirmed by the very facts. For he ordered cuts to be made in his legs with iron instruments, then to strike and pierce his sides with sharp needles, to rub them with salt, and to polish his wounds with tiles, imagining these tortures so that the athlete (ἀθλητής), overwhelmed by the sharpness of the pain, would grow weary and renounce his faith. But he said that the salt had given his body more firmness and health, so that he could endure the remaining battles (ἀγών). When the torturer lost hope on this point as well and grew weary, he ordered that this valiant man also be kept in prison.

After testing these three illustrious and courageous Christians in this first-rate manner, he immediately brought them again before his tribunal (βῆμα) in the same order (τάξις). Again, it was Tarachos who, with boldness (παρρησία), refuted the prefect (ἡγεμών) and the emperors, who are their own masters, gods weaker than all. He was struck on the mouth with stones, his teeth were pulled out, fire was eagerly placed in his hands, he was hung upside down, and he endured and bore in his nostrils smoke, vinegar, salt, and mixtures of the bitterest seeds. He considered this fire cold compared to eternal fire, and this acidity sweet. Thus, he was led back to prison. But Probos appeared to the judge no less "probus" (proven); he mocked the ridiculous gods as recounted impurely in pagan fables; he disregarded the emperors, who are their own masters (αὐτοκράτορες), because they command iniquitous things; he leaped with joy amid tortures as if rushing into them. Thus, he stood valiantly on an iron plate heated by fire, and when it was heated further, he walked on it even more resolutely, full of youth, calling it much colder than before and laughing at the judge’s invention; his hair was shaved with a razor, and he received burning coals on his temples; he stuck out and extended his tongue to the one who threatened to cut it off, but the latter yielded and desisted because of the athlete’s eagerness, for he heard him say: "I have a tongue that cannot be cut and is otherwise not deadly; God will hear it, He who said He also heard the voice of Abel’s blood cry out."

When Maximus then turned to the divine Andronicos, convinced by experience that every kind of torture would be useless and fruitless for him, he resorted to deceit. "Well," he said, "do something wise and sacrifice before suffering one of these unbearable torments; for those who were your advisers, after much sweat and futile labor, obeyed the emperors’ order and honored the gods." What did the martyr of Christ reply? "If you had persuaded me," he said, "I would say with you that they were persuaded by you; but if I cannot be persuaded—for may I never be so irrational or foolish in my spirit!—I have the pledge of their good conduct (εὐστάθεια); for there is in us all one thought conforming to religion (εὐσέβεια). Or do you not hear Paul writing to us: 'For you are all one in Christ Jesus'?" When the judge became enraged again at these words, he threatened to inflict unusual tortures. Truly, even when vigorously struck with dry and hard oxhide whips, the righteous man said, laughing: "You have uttered empty threats, for you have fallen back on these ordinary blows and could imagine or devise nothing extraordinary.

But even if you order salt to be sprinkled on me, you cause me no torment; rather, you prevent my body from rotting—or rather (μᾶλλον δέ), this is superfluous, for when Jesus took hold of me, He made me whole. Behold, you have seen that while I was entirely a wound from the previous blows, now I appear entirely clean, with no scar in me." Stung by the goad of these words, the impure one raged against the soldiers, accusing them of letting the martyrs secretly receive medical care. When they offered to have their heads cut off if they were caught doing such a thing, he was wounded by their defense as if by an accusation (κατηγορία) and was deeply pained, unable to bear that the power of truth was attested even by enemies. Then, ceasing his threats, he reserved the remaining battles (ἀγών) for the last day.

When he sat for the third time on the tribunal (βῆμα), he brought the martyrs back to the same tortures, as if they were performing a round dance. Leaving aside all flattery or deceitful tricks, he resorted to bestiality, devouring the saints' flesh and tearing it with successive tortures and teeth. From one, he stripped the skin of the head and cut off the tips of the lips; another's eyes he gouged out, and another's tongue he cut off; and to all, he similarly pierced the breasts, sides, legs, and spaces between the fingers with fire-heated iron spits, burning them severely, even to the bones. Finally, seeing that all had been refuted and that none of these invented tortures had succeeded, he ordered Probos and Andronicos to be forcibly given a portion of the flesh on the altar and wine from the impure libations that bring lawless (ἄνομος) drunkenness. The wretch accused them of having tasted these lawless (ἄνομος) offerings. But these valiant men, after long mocking the folly (ἄνοια) of this prefect, said to him: "After laying down your arms following many invented tricks and these varied tortures, you confess your defeat. For until this small moment, you fought against our reason and our own freedom to convert it to your thinking. Why then do you pronounce a verdict of condemnation against your own labors as useless? Truly, if victory consisted in bringing sacrificial flesh to our mouths against our will, you should have begun by lending us a false answer in place of the truth, imagined yourself victorious, and freed yourself from these affairs. But because you sought to seize our thought and show it deserting religion (εὐσέβεια), all your labor concerning us has been destroyed by you; for martyrdom is a battle of the soul through the body's painful torments. If you wish, we will cite to you the law of our God, who says: 'Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.' Why then are you dragged outside the arena's bounds?

Because you are untrained and unpracticed in all things. You act like one who has stripped for the contest and grappled with his adversary, and when he could not throw him by wrestling, he armed his hand with a sword. If forcing us to take a morsel of impure flesh against our will implied the charge of idolatry, you could likewise accuse the chaste of adultery if a shameless woman dared to embrace him against his will, or charge the just with theft if a garment not his own were thrown upon him; for sins are judged by the disposition of the spirit and the will's intent. Yet if we seem to you to have sinned in anything, remove these lips that against our will touched the libations; we are ready for all things, except one: to sacrifice to demons or do anything forbidden."

Hearing this, at dawn the next day, before sunrise, he ordered the valiant men to be carried to the amphitheater (θέατρον) outside the city, for they could not walk. Truly, when they were placed in public half-dead, these martyrs, with their limbs' extremities cut off, lacking the principal members by which a human is recognized, destroyed by cuts and burns, showed themselves perfect and complete as rational and inner men, made in the image of their Creator and appointed to rule over all beasts and reptiles on earth. When the beasts were loosed upon them, they did not touch these holy bodies, and Maximus was furious. Threatening the beast-keeper with death (κίνδυνος), he loosed upon them a man-killing (ἀνθρωποφόνος) bear, very fierce, bold, and bloodthirsty. It approached the venerable Andronicos, passing the others, and lay down beside him, licking the pus from his wounds with its tongue. The saint placed his own head under its teeth, trying to anger it, eager to become food for this wild and cruel beast and desiring his blessed passage to Christ. Yet the bear went to and fro, accompanying the one who drove and led it by force. It seemed as if the martyr played with it, as if it had forgotten its wild nature. When the judge, the rational being, saw this, he decreed the death of the irrational bear, thinking what had happened was its doing, not God's, who works wonders. After the bear, a merciless and cruel lioness rushed impetuously upon the saints as if upon formidable adversaries. Shaking the entire amphitheater (θέατρον) with a mighty and terrible roar, she approached the martyrs in a swift charge, then checked her own impetuosity and prostrated herself at their feet. Tarachos stretched out his venerable hand, which had endured martyrdom and was filled with pains for Christ, and seizing her now by the mane, now by the ears, drew her near. But she, refusing to be touched peacefully like a sheep, ran to the gate, sank her teeth

into the planks, forced her way out, and did not yield until the people cried: "Let her out!" No one will disbelieve these and similar deeds that also occurred for other martyrs, reading the letter written to the Romans by God-clad Ignatius, where these words are recorded: "May I obtain the beasts prepared for me! I pray they may be prompt. I will coax them to devour me quickly, not to hesitate as they do with others. And if they refuse, I will compel them."

When these martyrs had shone by such wonders and struggles, Maximus condemned them to depart this life by the sword, or rather (μᾶλλον δέ) to pass into true life and receive the crowns of immortality and the blessedness that follows. But the jealous and utterly impure judge, envying us because of the holy members, mingled the martyrs' bodies with the impure remains of those slain by gladiators (μονομάχος), and ordered ten soldiers (στρατιώτης) to guard them. While the guards ate, drank, and lit a fire, by an abundant downpour and an earthquake, the God of wonders extinguished the fire and put them to flight. As the venerable bodies lay mixed with others and could not be recognized in the darkness, a bright star from heaven, shedding its light on the earth and resting on each body, revealed where they were found, resembling the star that at the Emmanuel's birth according to the flesh led the Magi from Persia until it stopped over where the child lay, as it is written. Likewise, by an earthquake, He drove away both the martyrs' guards and those of the divine tomb—He who grants His servants similar honors. This happened while some faithful, kneeling on a mountain, prayed the Lord to grant them the holy members that had struggled for Him. Descending, they took them and hid them in a rock's hollow for fear of the prefect (ἡγεμών). Listen, you who neglect to kneel in church for prayer; understand how these men bowed their faces to the ground on stones at night, drenched by heavy rain. All this is written for our instruction, that we may be zealous for good; it gladdens the martyrs and Christ, the God of martyrs, to whom be praise with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto ages of ages. Amen.

**HOMILY 79 ON THE (WORD) SPOKEN BY OUR SAVIOR IN THE GOSPELS (Εὐαγγέλια) TO THE PHARISEES AND THE SCRIBES: "BUT YOU, YOU SAY: HE WHO SAYS TO HIS FATHER OR HIS MOTHER: THAT BY WHICH YOU MIGHT PROFIT FROM ME IS 'CORBAN,' (HE) SHALL NOT HONOR HIS FATHER OR HIS MOTHER." — AND HOW MUST THIS (WORD) BE UNDERSTOOD: IT IS NOT WHAT ENTERS THE MOUTH THAT DEFILES A MAN, BUT WHAT COMES OUT OF THE MOUTH? — AGAINST THOSE WHO WORE THE (OBJECTS) CALLED φύλας-τήρα OR AMULETS.** TABLE OF CONTENTS

A long time has passed since I last spoke to you in the church, because I was occupied with fighting and struggling against the heretics (αἱρετικοί), or rather (μάλλον δέ) against those who rebel against the mouth of the Lord, to speak more properly according to what is written. Now, if I had been strong in speech, I would have had to, as the legislation (νομοθεσία) of Paul says, persuade and “exhort you according to sound doctrine and at the same time “refute the contradictors”, since even among the children of Israel, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, (there were some who) worked eagerly with all their power and all their strength to rebuild the sacred temple and the walls of Jerusalem, while the barbarians around them were jealous. At first, (the latter) wanted to take part in this work by hypocritically displaying a religion (εὐσέβεια) that did not exist, thereby hiding their wicked cunning, and they were told: “It is not for you and us to build a house” for our God. And then they also tried to arm themselves boldly against them, to fight them, and to divert them from their zeal. But they found that they knew how to build and fight at the same time, as the Holy Book attests when it says: “Those who carried burdens on their shoulders were armed; (each) did the work with one hand and held the weapon with the other; and among those who built, each had his sword girded around his waist; and thus they built.”

Yes, so that by our silence we would not give rise to the lamentation of Jeremiah, who says: “The tongue of the one at the breast clings to his palate from thirst; the little children asked for bread, and there was no one to break it for them.” It is therefore good that we publicly present one of these (points) that have been particularly doubted by some isolated individuals, that we do this carefully (ἐπιμελεία), and that we serve general nourishment to the ears before the Church.

Recently, some, having heard the sacred reading of the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον) — and not with an indifferent ear — asked the question: "What does this mean that Our Lord said to the Scribes and the Pharisees: “But you, you say: He who says to his father or his mother: That by which you might profit from me is 'corban,' (he) shall not honor his father or his mother”?" I will begin a little earlier. Since the children of Israel had very coarse dispositions, having grown up in barbaric habits—I mean among the Egyptians—and since they could not learn through legislation (νομοθεσία) the purity of the spirit, the Law (νόμος) of Moses took care to advance them through bodily purifications, so that he who avoided defiling his flesh might perhaps (τοι) eventually, when he had learned it himself, also flee the stain of the soul and distance himself from the dead works (done) in sins. That is why, in truth, (Moses) on the one hand gave this order himself, saying: “He who touches corpses, or dead bodies, shall be impure”, and on the other hand, progressing, advancing, rising toward the understanding and the spirit of these commandments and ascending from the letter, he sang: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity (ἀνομία) and cleanse me from my sin; O God, create in me a clean heart.” But the Elders of the people, who were far from this and who had been blinded by the letter, stopped and adhered more carefully and meticulously to the observances of the Law (νόμος) concerning the body, to the point that they even extended them to cold objects and required that the bed, the earth, the basket, or the kettle be purified or washed and immersed in water if one of these corpses fell on them or if they were defiled by contact with some discharge or another body of that kind.

It was also something similar, the fact that they were not permitted to eat with unwashed hands. The Evangelist (Εὐαγγελιστής) Mark recalled all these (practices) together and each of them according to its kind, when he wrote in these terms: “For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands up to the elbows, according to the tradition of the Elders; and when they return from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they have bathed. There are many other (observances) they have received to keep, such as the washing of cups, pitchers, basins, and beds.” It was first because of the impure profit that the Elders, the Pharisees zealous for these (habits), and the Scribes took care of them, so that those caught in the nets of such sophistry (μικρολογία) would be obliged to

frequently visit them under the pretext that they had defiled themselves, either to make an offering for their purification or to question and learn, still paying a fee for the additional teaching required by these inquiries. That is why Our Lord himself “wept over such (teachers), saying: Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside they are full of rapine and impurity. Blind Pharisee! Clean first the inside of the cup and the dish, so that the outside may also be clean.” Then they multiplied their words either to pursue vain glory or to believe that through ordinances and traditions they removed the title and authority of legislators (νομοθέται). When they had such hard and miserable dispositions, some Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem approached Jesus, saying: “Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat (their) bread.”

It is just that we make known what this addition means. Why then did he say: "(The Scribes and the Pharisees) of Jerusalem," and not simply: "The Scribes and the Pharisees"? It is for the following reason. Since there were twelve tribes and they had been allotted portions in the Promised Land, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin occupied the portion of the territory around Jerusalem, while the other ten tribes were scattered in the remaining parts. (The latter) rebelled and strayed rebelliously with Jeroboam when Solomon reigned, and they transferred the worship of God to the golden calves. But after (the tribes of Judah and Benjamin) had been taken into captivity and deported to Assyria by Nebuchadnezzar and had returned, those who belonged to Judah and Benjamin still occupied the same portion (of the territory) and consequently the same city of Jerusalem; and they were equally concerned with the full observance of the Law (νόμος) and the customs of their fathers. As for the other ten tribes, in the days of Hosea, son of Elah, king of Israel, "the Assyrian Shalmaneser took them into captivity and made them dwell on the borders of the Medes; and from Babylon as well as from the neighboring nations and regions, he sent in their place to their land men who 'were annihilated and destroyed by wild beasts, until a priest taken captive came to them and taught them the Law (νόμος) of Moses; and these (settlers) served indiscriminately both the God of the Law (νόμος) and the demons, as the Holy Book also says: “These were the nations that feared the Lord and served their own idols; and their children and their children's children do to this day what their fathers did.” Thus, all who later inhabited and settled in these regions of the land

were necessarily also afflicted with the coarseness, the confused mixture, and the disorder (ἀσυμφωνία) of worships. This is what the addition of this (word) makes known: “Then the Scribes and the Pharisees from Jerusalem approached Jesus”, that is, those from the metropolis or mother of cities, where the temple is, where there is the lawful sacrifice, the order (τάξις) of other purifications, the dwelling in holy things; it is they who loudly proclaim the full observance (of these practices), who “carry very high the pride that comes from it, who gravely give them the name of the tradition of the Elders, and who condemn and rebuke as a very great fault the act of eating without washing one's hands.”

What then does Jesus, God, the Word, the wisdom of the Father, answer and say? He does not openly reject this reproach, though he could have said to them: "The disciples do not need to wash the hands of the body, after they have carried their cross, followed me, are pure from all evil action, have washed in purity the intellectual hands of their heart, and lead a life without trade, simple, which presents itself easily by itself at random, to the point that sometimes they even pluck ears of grain and thus supply the necessity of food. It is therefore not just to reproach men of this condition for eating without washing, any more than the birds that gather seeds. For when they have bathed in the sublimity of perfection and have washed and purified from all wickedness the inner man, they have shown superfluous the water “of the tradition of the Lucians that washes the external hands. It is in the same way, indeed, that Peter also was told: He who is purified does not need to be washed; but he is entirely clean."

"But," he says, "the disciples have not transgressed the tradition as you yourselves say; for it is neither out of contempt, nor laziness, nor betrayal, nor a life of pleasure that they have transgressed it; but they have enveloped in the sublimity of the splendor “of the soul its pettiness (μικροπρέπεια) that adheres only to the purity of the body; just as he who has received the commandment not to be angry and observes it, similarly shows superfluous the commandment that says: You shall not kill; for he who does not go as far as anger, how would he come to murder?"

Our Lord therefore did not say this in these terms; but he indicated it by the opposite, as we will show when the discourse advances, standing to excuse the blame that had been brought against the disciples by the Pharisees and the Scribes

and blaming them in turn, and (this) very harshly. For after they had alleged the tradition of the Elders, he did not say: "Why do the Elders themselves also transgress the commandment of God because of their own tradition?" — Otherwise, the Pharisees themselves would have imagined not having made a claim for their own infirmity, but having defended (συνήγορος) others, and thereby they would have drawn to their aid those who would have heard them. — But he said: “And you, why do you transgress...?” turning the whole accusation (κατηγορία) against them and avoiding to bring blame and pronounce a sentence even against the distant Elders.

Let us see then what was “the transgression of the commandment. God, he says, gave a commandment, saying: Honor your father and your mother; and: He who curses (his) father or (his) mother shall be put to death. But you, you say: He who says to (his) father or (his) mother: That by which you might profit from me is 'corban,' (he) shall not honor his father or his mother. And you have annulled the commandment of God because of your tradition.” You see how at the beginning and at the end he addresses the motive of accusation (κατηγορία) to them, saying at times: “But you, you say”, and again: “Because of your tradition”, without ever mentioning the Elders. But perhaps you will say: "It seems to me that the things written have no connection (between them); for what is common between the reproach of the Pharisees and the Scribes who accused and blamed (the disciples) for not washing their hands and the commandment that orders that parents must be honored?" — But if you insist, you will see that the things that have been said agree very well (with each other) and that they are very close and not at all distant. Indeed, since it was from avarice (φιλαργυρία) that the Elders, the Pharisees, and the Scribes were sick, as I have said, they rejoiced in the inquiry made about the traditions; and when they saw that the commandment that says: “Honor (your) father and (your) mother”, harmed them and cut off the profit “they had at heart, consider what they invent and where they go. For they set against it and raise against it, to abolish it, the greatest commandment of all by rank (τάξις) and force, which legislated and ordered: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.” The children, indeed, made their parents profit from all they could acquire and gave it to them, so that what they had acquired was considered to belong to them rather (ἄλλον) than to themselves. This is also what the patriarch Jacob makes known; for it was Simeon and Levi who pillaged the city of Shechem, after

taking it according to the law (νόμος) of combat, and it was their father who at the moment of his death left it to Joseph, as if he had acquired it himself, saying: “I give you, as an additional portion, more than to your brothers, Shechem, which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and my bow.” However, the children themselves thought that they had none of their own profits and personal gains, and in everything they condescended to (their) father and (their) mother, “fearing to rise thereby in some way (τοι) against the law (νόμος) that wants them to be honored.”

Against this, what does the grave tradition of the Elders (do)? — It allowed the children to proclaim in advance, to attest in advance in a certain way and to say to (their) father and (their) mother: "All that by which you might derive utility, or you might derive profit, from me, and (all) of which you might think to make your profit, it is 'corban,' which has already been given by me, set apart, and consecrated to God." From then on, the parents found themselves, because of their embarrassment, struggling against the higher and grave law (νόμος) that wants God to be honored above all, and necessarily they gave their consent, not daring even to touch what had been given in advance by a promise and set apart by vow as a sacred thing. It is by this cunning means (τρόπος) that the children who deprived their parents of the debt ordered by the Law participated with the Elders in these execrable gifts.

Mark made clearer what had been said by Matthew, when he wrote: “But you, you say: That by which you might profit from me is 'corban,' that is, an offering or a gift.” In the Hebrew language, "corban" means an offering and a gift that has been set apart and consecrated to God. It must be known that among the Greeks, in the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον) of Mark, the word "offering" is given with its Hebrew pronunciation, which is "corban," and that in Matthew, there is the Greek expression (λέξις), which is δῶρον, meaning either "offering" or "gift."

It is for this that the chief priests who bought from Judas the “treason of Christ, which fights against God (θεομάχος), and who did not participate in the impurity, said about these thirty pieces of silver: “It is not permitted, because they are the price (τιμή) of blood, to put them in the 'corban,'“ giving the name of "corban" to the treasury or chest (κορβανᾶς) of the offerings and gifts that were presented to

God. It is said that this word: "That by which you might derive utility from me," also means: "That by which you might derive profit from me," and that "utility" means "profit"; and it is also easy to understand this from the divine Book. In one of the epistles called catholic (καθολική), I mean in (the epistle) of Jude, it is written in these terms about some: “Woe to them! For they have walked in the way of Cain and have rushed into the error of Balaam for a reward,” and again a little later: “These are murmurers, complainers, walking according to their lusts; and their mouth speaks proud things, showing respect of persons for the sake of gain.”

Because we have explained this, as much as was possible, see now how our Savior “has annulled in a suitable, though hidden, manner the accusation (κατηγορία) of the Pharisees, by the blame and reproach he addressed to them in turn. Indeed, as they blamed the disciples for not being pure because they ate without washing their hands, he himself shows that they also lacked true purity, because through avarice (φιλαργυρία) they abolished the commandment of God, while the disciples applied themselves not only not to be avaricious (φιλαργυρία), but also to be completely poor. For he who is in such dispositions is the very one who has pure hands; listen to the prophet Isaiah who says: “He who hates injustice and iniquity (ἀνομία) and shakes his hands so as not to accept a bribe.”

It is by this also that the hidden harmony (εὐκαιρία) of the refutation appears: "If you, O Pharisees and Scribes, indeed," he says, "have invented in (your) great wickedness to hide under the greater commandment that orders: “You shall love the Lord your God”, the smaller one that wants parents to be honored—by saying through the tradition greedy for profits (φιλοκερδής): “He who says to (his) father or (his) mother: That by which you might profit from me is 'corban,' (he) shall not honor his father or his mother”—how do you not let the disciples, who through the extent and greatness of perfection are pure according to the inner man, omit your tradition that is truly dirty, that is considered to wash the hands of the body, that adheres to external whiteness and makes no account of what is inside, as happens for the tombs that are adorned on the outside and inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness”, as the Book of the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλια) says in “another place?"

After by these words Jesus not only annulled the accusation (κατηγορία) of the Pharisees but also showed that they were (themselves) caught by what was the object of their accusation, he touched them in a wise and divine manner and showed that it is by the heart and not by the external bath that one judges what is pure and what is not pure, also citing the prophet Isaiah who wove the accusation (κατηγορία) with him and saying: “Hypocrites, Isaiah has well prophesied of you, saying: This people draws near to me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” Then, after showing that the prophet called the teachings of the Pharisees commandments of men where there is nothing that concerns itself with the Law (νόμος) and that is divine, but (where) all is human, and after also mentioning the people, he immediately transfers the word to the people of his time, teaching us, as it is written, that he will direct his words according to justice. Indeed, having called the crowd, he says to them: “Hear and understand: It is not what enters the mouth that defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, that is what defiles the man.”

"The Pharisees," he says, "considering the human commandments of the Elders, (made) a reproach to me by asking this question: Why do (your) disciples eat without washing their hands? And I say not only that the disciples are far above such (commandments), but also that the time has come when we will no longer care even for this childish and very coarse teaching of the Law (νόμος) concerning foods. The Law (νόμος), indeed, had ordered us to eat such and such a thing and to avoid such and such (another), not because the foods produced the purity that is according to the spirit or the impurity, but so that we would not rush like wild beasts toward everything with a mouth that would have no restraint and that we would not make pleasure the end of nourishment either. That is why it also said: “You shall eat neither fat nor blood”, the former as it fattens the body and leads to debauchery, and the latter as something that recalls the wild beast and is barbaric. Now, since the word of the Gospel orders us to look at the birds of the sky and to run like them after simple and unrefined food that comes from seeds, it is henceforth superfluous for us to inquire about the varieties of foods. For, he says, “what enters the mouth does not defile a man, but what comes out of the mouth, namely what comes from the heart; for from the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies.” How then would it

profit you, O Pharisee, not to eat fat, and (yet) to arrive at the covetousness that comes from the heart and defiles the man? For it is from the heart that comes the first and voluntary movement of lust (ἡδονή). Or what profit (would you gain) by abstaining from the blood of animals deprived of reason, when you become cruel like a wild beast and shed human blood? Thus in truth you forget then what the Law (νόμος) wants, since you seek what enters the mouth and does not defile the man and do not notice what comes out of (the mouth) and defiles (the man). For it is because of what comes out (of the mouth) that from the beginning it was imposed on you as a law (νόμος) and you were ordered to abstain even from what (there) enters."

If someone says: "If what enters the mouth does not defile, why then did the martyrs also have to taste the pagan sacrifices?" — He who thinks this has forgotten that the food is not mentioned for itself alone, but that it is mixed with blasphemy, and that it defiles the man not because it is food, but because it is blasphemous and impure; now, that blasphemy comes from the heart, that is known in advance. Indeed, if someone had not determined in advance to be subject to God and was disposed to blasphemy, he would not have to taste this impure sacrifice; for that it is not the food itself that can defile by itself, but that it is the spiritual disposition of the soul with which this food is taken, Paul has attested, he who writes to the Corinthians and says: “If one of the unbelievers invites you and you wish to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no questions for conscience' sake. But if anyone says to you: This has been offered in sacrifice to idols, do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you and for conscience' sake.” For this reason the Maccabees also fought in the combat (ἀγών) perfectly and according to the Law, not wanting to eat the pork impurely in transgression of the Law (νόμος). Until then, indeed, the figurative (prescriptions) were in force, and conduct depended on the letter of the Law; for whoever ate what was forbidden became impure and defiled himself, not because he took food, but because he (ate) what was forbidden. After the coming of Christ, who abolished the letter and confirmed the spirit of the Law (νόμος) by the evangelical and sublime life, who restrained what comes out of the mouth and also what comes out of the heart and defiles the man, who strangled the lustful look by the penalty of adultery and the movement of anger by the (penalty) of murder, from then on what enters the mouth no longer

defiles the man; for the legal observance of foods is abolished for him who lives in Christ in an evangelical and sublime manner.

With the Pharisees who then did not grasp this word but thought that the observance of the Law (νόμος) was entirely in the foods, and who were scandalized, as with the disciples who also felt the same, he behaved, after having finished the conversation on this subject, with such gentleness and calm, saying at the end: “But to eat without washing one's hands, (that) does not defile the man”, that he seemed to speak only of this question and not of the observance of foods. That from the beginning this seemed difficult even to the disciples, Peter made known in the Acts (Πράξεις), when he had the vision of the linen sheet filled with all the birds, quadrupeds, and reptiles, and heard: “Rise, Peter, kill and eat”, and answered and said: “Far be it from me, Lord, for I have never eaten anything common or unclean.” (The disciples) themselves, saying: “Do you know that the Pharisees were scandalized when they heard this word?”, have also shown here significantly that in part they too were scandalized. That is why Jesus attacked (the Pharisees) even very harshly, saying: “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.” He called "plant unknown to God" the branches of the Pharisaic traditions, which remain in the letter in a controversial, futile, and inopportune manner, and not the Law (νόμος) that was given by God, far from it! Indeed, that the tongue that is defiled and that fights against God (θεομάχος) does not itch for that to the impious Manicheans, because (Christ) called the Pharisees blind for the reason that they had fixed their eye on the letter and did not want to look at the spirit and the inner meaning. From this it also comes that, when they were scandalized without reason, he ordered to despise them by saying: “Let them alone”; and he showed, to also distance the crowd from the pernicious teaching of the Pharisees, that there is great danger (κίνδυνος) in using blind guides on the paths of (actions) that must be done. But when those who collected the didrachma to which the firstborn were subject said to (his) disciples: “Does your Teacher not pay the didrachma?”, after having shown that he himself was exempt and not subject to the tribute as the true Son of the King and God of God, he said to Peter: “But, so as not to scandalize them, give it to them”, teaching us, in worldly affairs and in all that concerns goods and riches, not to despise those who are scandalized, but to disregard those who, like the Pharisees, jealously guard

and retain divine doctrine, when they are scandalized uselessly. For because both the Jews and the pagans were scandalized and mocked the preaching of the cross, it did not (follow) that Paul was silent for that; but on the contrary he said: “But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.” Thus we must therefore do (our) spiritual and divine actions, even if the pagans and the Jews, or any other adversary of God, are torn by scandal.

We must distance ourselves both from the traditions of the Pharisees and from what resembles them; it is from them that descend genealogically either these (objects) called φύλας-τήρα or "preserving amulets," or these straps tied and attached with χορδέα or linen threads that some people hang around their neck or other members; for it is (of the Pharisees) that Our Lord says in the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλια): “They enlarge their φυλακτήρια or (purple) ornaments, and they lengthen the fringes of their garments.” It is written in the form of history, in the Book of Acts (Πράξεις), that the sudaria or cloths taken from those that had been on Paul's body, once placed on the sick, also drove away diseases; but “this came from a custom of the people, unknown to Paul, and not from his teaching; for we find that the divine Book prescribes only this: “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” You see that the oil of the saints that is applied according to the Law delivers not only from illness but also from the multitude of sins. What it is permitted to do well and what can present such an advantage, why then do you do it with sin and harm, taking pleasure in the bandages and the χορδέα or laces that are around the hand and the neck? You perhaps, indeed, it is after having received them from the saints that you hang them on yourself; but others (will hang them on themselves, after having received them) from a diabolical invention and an incantation. How then will I know the difference and prevent the harm? Indeed, even if you, you do not suffer harm, as I have said, you nevertheless give others the occasion to be wounded by this example. That is why, when, not out of idolatry but out of unreasonable habit, some Christians in Corinth went to pagan feasts, sat at table in the temples, and said just like you that they suffered no harm, Paul wrote to them in these terms: “If anyone sees you, who have knowledge, sitting at table in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things offered to idols? And

through your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ."

We must therefore stop and cut off these unreasonable habits, when we know that we give occasion for others to also suffer some harm. I have told you this, not to set a trap for you, but to render you, during your instruction, capable of examination and masters of what it is fitting to do and to persuade you to judge nothing before the time and not to say that this patriarch (πατριάρχης) has given you a very grave and severe commandment. For the greatness of (this) title was added to greatly increase my accusation (κατηγορία); I, however, rested, patiently awaiting the time to speak, according to the word of the Ecclesiastes who says: "There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak." All that we do, indeed, we do out of pity for your souls, so that, doing what is good not by force but willingly, you may become perfect and complete as your heavenly Father is perfect. To him be praise with Christ and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

**HOMILY 80 ON THE DAY WHEN HE WAS PLACED AT THE HEAD OF THE CITY AND BY A SIGN OF GOD RECEIVED THE IMPOSITION OF HANDS (ΧΕΙΡΟΤΟΝΊΑ). (THIS HOMILY) WAS PRONOUNCED IN THE ORATORY OF THE HOLY MARTYR ROMANOS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FOURTH YEAR. IT IS THE FIRST HOMILY (OF THIS YEAR).**
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For me, I consider this day very profitable, (this day) when I was placed at your head, when the Holy Spirit, inclining the intellectual horn, anointed me in my smallness with the anointing of the pontificate, when, after being led to a spiritual bed, Christ, who negotiates betrothals in marriages of this kind and in unions free from corruption, strengthened by the orthodoxy of faith and the purity of conduct, delivered and entrusted to me, as a sacred spouse, the Church which was the first to bear the name of Christians. With their husbands as well as with relatives, so that the witnesses (of this union) say: "Truly, it is from the Lord that (this) wife agrees with (this) husband, she who has repelled like strangers those who have defected and who has shown that they cohabited falsely with her, to the point that even those who, like John the Baptist, are (animated) by the groaning Spirit and cry out while serving the Lord: “It is not permitted for you to possess her!”—and this truly because they consider and regard us and are filled with zeal for the Lord Almighty." For he who has made such a defection, even if he is thought to be with the wife, is not truly with her, though he dares to sit bodily on the patriarchal throne.

Therefore, it was indeed a horn full of mystical oil that once anointed the high priests and kings symbolically, so that we might learn that this anointing does not come from below nor from human favor “for those who are worthy, but descends from above, from the Father of lights” and the head of all principality, (all) authority, and (all) power. For it is certain that the horn is very high and elevated above the head, and it is the member placed highest, just as God, who gives the anointing, is above every seat and (all) domination of those who are elevated and above all. That is why those who have been anointed with the pontifical anointing, and especially those (anointed) with the patriarchal anointing, who through this (anointing) have been enriched with the Spirit befitting the head and strengthened and confirmed by Him, are the “κεφάλαιον”, or the head, of all who hold the place

(τάξις) of the head. They must be the “horn of salvation” of the army arrayed for the Lord’s battle and the spiritual phalanx, fighting ahead of the people and saying to the one who anointed them: “By You, we will overthrow our enemies, and in Your name, we will despise those who rise against us.” Hence, Moses, blessing the patriarch Joseph and the tribes descended from him, also said in the blessings: “His beauty is that of a bull; his horns are the horns of a rhinoceros; with them, he will overthrow nations together to the ends of the earth.” This is said of Joseph historically and symbolically, and it was prophesied and fulfilled concerning Christ, of whom Joseph was the figure (τύπος). He was sold by his brothers, just as Christ was by Judas. He was thrown into the pit and rose from it, just as Jesus (was placed) in the tomb and resurrected. He was stripped of his multicolored tunic, just as our Savior was stripped of His seamless tunic woven from above. He descended into Egypt (Αἴγυπτος), just as Emmanuel into this world. He was imprisoned, brought out the cupbearer and Pharaoh’s servant who were confined there, ruled over Egypt, returned to the Promised Land, and descended again into Egypt—just as our Lord appeared in the regions of Sheol, shattered its bronze gates, and broke its iron bars, cried out to those in chains and under the dominion of death: “Come out”, and to those (who were) in darkness: “Show yourselves”, returned with the flesh to heaven, He who fills the universe incorporeally and boundlessly, and even so has not abandoned us but said to His disciples: “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you”, and: “Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the world.” He also fulfilled in Himself the blessing that the great Moses gave to Joseph; and with a single stroke, in the same way, through the commandments of the Gospels and the teachings of the Apostles, as well as with sharp horns, He overthrew the ancestral idolatry of the nations to the ends of the earth and uprooted it. And rightly did (Moses) call "horns of a rhinoceros" the horns of the patriarchs and those anointed by God. For although they must abound in many kinds (εἶδος) of virtues, being sharpened by the labors of action, and are chiefly bound to ascetic life and devoted to work, they must keep their horns whole and undivided to the end, like the powerful and invincible horn of the rhinoceros. In their conduct, they will not split in two or attempt to serve God and money. Nor will they divide the faith with false and condemned doctrines (δόγματα). They will not divide, like Arius in his rage, the sole divinity of the three hypostases of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit into foreign and diverse essences (οὐσίαι). They will not cut, with Nestorius’s Jewish knife, the ineffable and indivisible incarnation of God the

Word by the duality of natures after the union. They will not falsely show our salvation, like the atheist Eutyches, nor with impious teeth tear it from our Savior and our physician, attributing to Him foreign flesh or a semblance of flesh, not the true (flesh) of the same essence (ὁμοούσιος) as ours, (but) free and pure from all sin. They will not scrape away the understanding of Christ's coming in the flesh, as if with a scraper, following the example of the wicked and senseless Apollinaris, nor leave us without healing in that part by which we were made in the image of God. Like the Manichaeans, who go beyond all wicked blasphemy and impiety, they will not divide into two principles, Evil and Good, the essence and substance of this universe, which was brought into existence, subsists, and endures by the will of one good Lord, Creator, and Almighty God.

All these, because they have divided horns and have been divided in spirit by human thoughts, dared to divide the simple, uniform (μονοειδής), and indivisible faith. But "the one anointed by grace from above, who has preserved this (faith) in purity and is armed by the word of truth as with a rhinoceros's horn, repels the assaults of these adversaries' battles and, with David, the divine psalmist and prophet, sings: "I will rejoice forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob; I will break all the horns of the wicked, but the horns of the righteous will be exalted." He confesses and believes in one God the Father, Creator and Lord of all that exists, and in the one Word, eternally begotten of Him according to essence (φύσις), who in the last days, unchanged, by the hypostatic union, through the operation of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mother of God, took flesh of the same essence (ὁμοούσιος) as ours, animated by a rational and intellectual soul, who is one after the incarnation, the same who is God and man, so that in this He is of the same essence (ὁμοούσιος) as God the Father, and in that (of the same essence) as us, being one of two even after the union, without division by duality. (He believes) in the Holy Spirit, of the same essence (ὁμοούσιος) as the Father and the Son, who proceeds from the Father timelessly and eternally. The Trinity is neither increased by addition due to the incarnation of the Son nor diminished by subtraction or change, but is preserved without diminution by sound confession, or rather (μᾶλλον δέ) saves those who confess it thus.

Therefore, I rightly said that each year, when this day comes, I derive great profit from it, not because I have ascended to such a height of glory and sacred authority,

but because I greatly lack the mark of the pontiff and perhaps crawl below in earthly works while sitting on high and ought to rise to heaven on the wings of virtues. When I renew in my memory these covenants I made with God at that time and reflect that I am bound to fulfill them, I am filled with fear and trembling; and while I nearly lose my breath from fear, I wither. For the words spoken in the (liturgical) text and recited over the head of each anointed one have the force of covenants; and that is why the laying on of hands on this act of debt is properly called χειροτονία, that is, the imposition of hands. Indeed, these spiritual garments that a man puts on when, by grace, he is promoted to the priesthood, he must wear in reality, not boasting only of sacred names, appearing naked in deeds and presenting a deceptive exterior while inwardly having dispositions that are evil and worthy of tears. For who can express in words the magnitude of the shame on the last day, with which God threatens those in this state through the prophet Isaiah: "Every robe and garment gathered with fraud, they will return with exchange", that is, shamefully leaving the robe of honor they have dishonored and accounting for why they took falsehood in exchange for truth—and in the Gospels, when He clearly exclaims in the blessed feast: "Friend, how did you enter here without a wedding garment?"

Let no one, then, pride himself on (his) anointing, (his) sacred nomination, or (his) position (τάξις); but let him consider where the greatness of this honor leads him and, if he behaves unworthily, the provisions of the greater punishment awaiting him. For "the small will be pardoned mercifully, but the mighty will be examined mightily", says a sage; and a mighty examination is reserved for the strong. The prophet Ezekiel also thinks that those who once held sovereignty on earth will be tormented with pains equal to the pride of their tyranny and will be led into the lower pit, saying: "There is Assyria and all its assembly. And again: There is Elam and all its army, who spread terror in the land of the living and received their torment with those who descend into the pit. And again: There were delivered Meshech and Tubal and all the army of each, and they lay with the fallen heroes of old who descended into hell." Therefore, it is fitting that he who is honored with any authority or sovereignty, especially spiritual, measure himself daily by the greatness of the gift (received), not dizzying his mind with external imagination (φαντασία), but reflecting and, as if a sword were suspended over his head, seeing the reversal and wrath of God, should he behave unworthily, and above all the

trembling-filled last day, its pains and chastisements, from which no one can escape by any intercession, and thereafter the unquenchable fire and unbearable, endless evils. For He who anointed Saul later said: “I regret having anointed Saul king, for he has turned away from Me and has not kept My words.” And this word: "I regret" is written to show that God’s calls and gifts are not forced or necessary and do not violate freedom. For it was not because (God) made (Saul) king that He necessarily had to make him good; that was indeed the matter of (Saul’s) will. That there is no regret in God, who knows all things before they happen, Paul attested, writing to the Romans: “The gifts and call of God are irrevocable.” Therefore, it is also permitted for one who repents to return to the honor from which he fell, so that God’s (gifts) remain fixed, and it is for you to appropriate them by virtue or alienate them by sin.

For this reason, from the very beginning, after creating man and establishing him as sovereign over all on earth, when He saw malice increase—though He foresaw from the beginning what would happen—He said similarly, showing that freedom possesses full mastery: “I will blot out man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, from man to cattle, from creeping things to birds of the air, for I regret that I made them.” And instead of "I regret," another interpreter transmitted: "I repented." These words, spoken in a manner suited to men (ἀνθρωποπρεπῶς) to descend to us and extend helping hands to (our) weakness, must be applied to God in ways worthy of God (θεοπρεπῶς) and fitting. For this word: "I repented," also shows God’s tender love for us, as if He said: "It is because of the overflow of your malice that (I repent), drawn as I am to the opposite feeling; for the scale of justice now outweighs the abundance of My goodness, which you have rendered vain by your sins." Consider how the word (of the Law) seeks among these defects not only the grave ones but also the light ones, (such as) scabies and the like. Let no one think he is exempt because they are not visible to bodily eyes; for if we look into the mirror of conscience, we will find them in ourselves, either all or most of them. Who, then, would not weep and lament over them, not seek solitude, and there seek groans capable of destroying the shame of these defects?

As for me, by these words and thoughts, I wish not only today but every day to wash, purify, and renew my anointing and (my) priesthood, never letting the memory of these (events) grow old or fade in me. For the sacred Book also knows

of renewals of anointing. Samuel records that he once anointed Saul king; and again he said: “Let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there”; and all the people went to Gilgal, and there Samuel anointed Saul king before the Lord. He did this at the same time because he wished to present him to the people and, at the same time, as if to mark and express more clearly (this) dignity in him, as in a negligent man, so that he would not forget (his condition). Then, through the prophet Isaiah, in a clear proclamation, God commands all the Churches: “They shall renew themselves”—and this while crying out to the islands. He calls them islands because they arise and shine among nations from the depths of salty and bitter idolatry, like the sea, offering the peaceful harbors (λιμένες) of piety (θεοσέβεια) to those swimming in the unbelief of error. And they will rightly be called islands, also because they are struck and buffeted on all sides by the rough seas (τραχύτης) and storms of trials; but they have scattered and dissolved them into foam through patience, struggle, attack, and hope in the rock that is Christ, the arm of the Most High Father. This is further shown by Him who speaks in Isaiah: “The islands will wait for Me and hope in My arm.” We must, therefore, renew ourselves, so to speak, at every moment, forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead. This is also what Paul teaches us, saying: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation”—that is: He who belongs to Christ, he says, must show it by new works, presenting himself as if newly created and (become) a new man; which he further explains by adding: “The old has passed away; behold, all things have become new.” It is because Romanos, too, who among the martyrs surpassed all in patience and wisdom, constantly increased this renewal, that the virtues he acquired through many labors did not suffice for him, and he hastened to martyrdom as if he had no provision for salvation. After extinguishing with prayer the flame prepared for him, he offered his tongue to the sword, striving to show that one combat (ἀγών) (contained) many martyrdoms and to offer each of his limbs to be cut off; and even in this, he did not cease or stop ascending but advanced and desired still greater things. I know well that, even after obtaining them, he prays for us, so that we may not stray from the kingdom of heaven through Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be praise with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 81 ON WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW: "WHEN THE DISCIPLES ARRIVED AT CAPERNAUM, THOSE WHO COLLECTED THE DIDRACHMA APPROACHED PETER AND SAID TO HIM: 'DOES YOUR TEACHER NOT PAY THE DIDRACHMA?' AND THE REST." TABLE OF CONTENTS

The sacred word reported in Proverbs, which says: “The glory of God is to conceal the word”, has often astonished me. "And how," you might say, "does it bring glory to God that His words are hidden and not manifest?" How? You will know clearly if you learn the power of the word. For what is hidden drives you to seek the wealth placed in divine words, just as when a grain of gold appears on the surface of the earth, it is the hidden gold ore that leads to excavation. Those who are learned and expert in this matter know this. For it is known in advance that we seek what is hidden, whereas what is completely concealed and made invisible makes us lose hope or does not even enter our minds at all. The Scripture inspired by God is also something similar: on the one hand, by its clear, simple, and easily grasped style, and by the external meaning that appears on the surface and presents itself readily, it meets those who encounter it like grains of gold; and on the other hand, by its abundant and secret study (θεωρία), it drives us to seek wealth with sagacity, and through what is acquired, it excites us to praise God, so that he who, by his desire to learn (φιλομαθία) and his love of labor (φιλοπονία), has found one of the divine meanings and has been enlightened according to his strength by the moderate brilliance of study (θεωρίας), exclaims with the Psalmist: “Let us praise God who reveals such things”, and says: “You have made known to me the unknown and hidden things of Your wisdom”. That is why our Savior said to the Jews who clung to the letter: “Search the Scriptures, for you think you have eternal life in them”. And who would not praise God if, as a result of this search, he comes to find hidden and eternal life? Thus, it brings glory to God that His words are hidden. For what is easy to grasp seems in some way to be easily neglected; but what has been found through painful labor is carefully preserved as a personal good, and it contains within itself the reward of love for labor (φιλοπονία). Truly, the enjoyment of study in this present world and the happiness in the future life are reserved by the just Judge for those who have lived in this way. That is why one of the prophets, showing that this happens in us not spontaneously but as a result of laborious research, wrote these words: “Light the lamp of knowledge for

yourselves while there is still time; seek the Lord until the fruits of righteousness come to you". And one lights the lamp of knowledge for oneself through the purification produced by virtuous actions and through diligence and the habit of engaging with the sacred Books. These indeed hide within themselves the glory of God and, in turn, are hidden by His glory when it manifests and shows itself, so that they do not seem to have revealed even a small part of themselves. Now, some interpreters have transmitted this sentence as follows: "The glory of God conceals the word"; and truly, the agreement and sequence of meaning are preserved in this way in two respects. Because they have the Scripture, the Jews think they have eternal life, though they do not; but we, because we have pursued the understanding of Scripture through the knowledge that is in Christ, obtain through it true and endless life. That is why our Lord, revealing the depth of the Gospel word, said: "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine". But holy things escape many and remain hidden and invisible to those who are defiled and impure. Just as the pearl is taken from the depths of the sea and the shell, where it was unknown, once discovered, it shines and sheds light on all around it, envelops itself in its own brightness, and excites praise for God who made it.

Let us see, then, if such is also the word placed before us to be interpreted, and if it contains the glory of God hidden within it and a profitable study (θεωρία) "When the disciples arrived at Capernaum," it is said, "those who collected the didrachma approached Peter and said to him: 'Does your teacher not pay the didrachma?' He replied: 'Yes.'" It is right to first inquire what this didrachma tax was and where it came from genealogically, and I will explain. When Pharaoh resisted and opposed the divine command and refused to deliver the children of Israel from cruel servitude, Egypt was struck by painful plagues that followed one another without improving its disposition or changing it from what it was before. Instead, it persisted in imitating the cunning and habits of the ruler and executed his cruel and unspeakable orders. The last plague was the killing of the firstborn, extending from men to cattle and flocks, but sparing the firstborn of the children of Israel. Indeed, God commanded that they be set apart and consecrated to Him, ensuring that His people would not forget divine aid. After giving this command, shortly after giving the Law (νόμος) and the rules concerning sacrifices and sacred services, He ordered Moses in the wilderness to conduct a census of those he led, to separate the

tribes, and to arrange the order in which they should march and camp when they traveled daily. It was then that He set apart the tribe of Levi for the priesthood and the other services in the tabernacle of the testimony, saying that He took them in place of the firstborn. But it is good to cite also the words of the Scriptures inspired by God, which say: “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel in place of all the firstborn who open the womb among the children of Israel; they shall be their ransom, and the Levites shall belong to Me. For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to beast; they shall be Mine.” He did not stop there with this command, nor did He make this exchange something common. He ordered that the heads be counted one by one, and after the tribe of Levi was counted (and found to number twenty-two thousand) and the firstborn among the children of Israel exceeded this number by two hundred seventy-three, He allowed money to be received for their ransom, saying: “For the ransom of these two hundred seventy-three who exceed the number of the Levites among the firstborn of the children of Israel, you shall take five shekels per head; according to the didrachma of the sanctuary, you shall take twenty obols per shekel; you shall give the money to Aaron and his sons for the ransom of those who are in excess among them.” But it must be known that "didrachma" and "shekel" (σίκλος) are the same thing. For just as He said: “They shall be twenty obols (ὀβολοί) per shekel (σίκλος)”, so in Exodus, when He commanded the children of Israel to offer a fixed sum of money for the maintenance and construction of the tabernacle, He determined that the didrachma would be twenty obols (ὀβολοί), saying explicitly: “The didrachma shall be twenty obols (ὀβολοί).” This didrachma tax, offered to the high priests for these two hundred seventy-three persons (πρόσωπον) who exceeded the number of the Levites, was thus paid by the firstborn of all the children of Israel to the sons of Aaron. After it was decreed as something obligatory for everyone, what had been established as law (νόμος) to be collected for each of these two hundred seventy-three heads was five didrachmas or shekels. This indicates a great mystery for those who can look, even a little, into the depths of the spirit. For every firstborn is a figure (τύπος) of Adam, the first formed and the πρωτόγονος, or firstborn, of our race (γένος), who, deceived by sin and overcome by forbidden food, gave himself over to debauchery through his five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. For he too, like Eve, “saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes to

behold, and splendid and beautiful to consider", and he ate its fruit after taking it from Eve, who gave it to him.

Therefore, the word teaches and instructs us—we who are bound to apply ourselves to sacred service, we who descend from Adam by genealogy, we who are slaves to sin through the five senses—by this example of the firstborn who gave five didrachmas for themselves or offered five shekels to the Lord, that we must either set ourselves apart and consecrate ourselves to God or give five shekels (σίκλοι) of silver. And what is this intellectual silver if not the trial and labors of the virtues that purify the senses? "The testing of gold and silver is the trial by fire", says the sacred Book, so that he who is not in this state, like the firstborn of the Egyptians, will be put to death by the destroyer, because he is condemned to the snares of death. Thus, as a firstborn, this legal tax of the didrachma was also demanded of Christ. For it was known to all that He was the firstborn, though many were ignorant of the mystery concerning His mother's virginity before and after childbirth. Yet in many ways He was exempt from this kind of tax.

First, He is the new and second Adam, who on the one hand is of the same race (γένος) and essence (οὐσία) as the first, and on the other hand is from heaven as God of God, not from dust, that is, He was not lowered to dust because of sin and did not hear: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return", but showed in Himself our nature without stain: "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth". How then could He who was not subject to sin be subject to the tribute, the didrachma demanded because of Adam's sin, the first formed and our first father? He is the one who swept the house, according to the parable in the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλια), that is, purified the world by His blood; He is the one who lit the lamp, either His own flesh shining with purity and holiness or the commandments brighter than all contained in the Gospels; He is the one who sought carefully and found the drachma, the divine and royal image of our soul buried in the thick dust of passions. For the drachma is also a copper denarius (δηνάριον) bearing a royal effigy (εἰκών), but because it is treated with contempt and often discarded, it becomes covered with verdigris and grime. He is the one who calls His neighbors, the armies of angels in heaven who are also near and serve Him, and says to them: "Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma I had lost". For this reason, how could it have been just to demand the didrachma from Him?

Second, He was also exempt from this tax and not subject to it for the following reason: If the money collected from the firstborn was given to the high priests, and if by the economy He became the apostle and high priest of our faith, as Paul says, then as high priest, He necessarily belonged to those who receive the tribute, not those who give it. Then how could it be fitting for the supreme high priest, who is so forever according to the order (τάξις) of Melchizedek, who passed through the heavens and is and has become higher than all, to give tribute to those who serve in a tabernacle made by human hands, who were not subject to the collection of the legal didrachma? It is because He was to cast an intellectual didrachma for us into death—I mean His soul and body—to nail to the cross the record of sin set against the entire human race (γένος) and to break by His particular death the general death that weighed upon all. For He was one of two, divinity and humanity, complete in their own notion, without being divided by duality after the union. After being mixed with suffering through the flesh, remaining impassible as God, to secure impassibility for us through the resurrection, He also said in the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλια), sometimes: "The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world", and sometimes: "I lay down My life for the sheep"—parts, namely the flesh and the soul, which He willingly separated when He tasted our death, for our death consists in the separation of the soul from the body. But neither was His soul abandoned in Sheol, as it is written—for He said He had the power to lay it down and the power to take it up again—nor did His flesh see corruption. With good reason we have called the soul and body an intellectual didrachma. The soul, because it was created rational, made in the image of God, and capable of receiving justice, wisdom, and other virtues, bears the royal effigy (εἰκών) like a drachma. That is why the senses of the body, serving intellectual operations, are also in a way rational, presenting like wax a resemblance to the royal effigy (εἰκών), that is, the seal, and have acquired a certain disposition to resemble the intellect. Thus, through these two parts, as through a didrachma, it can be proclaimed that man was made in the image of God, who from soul and body is without confusion one person (πρόσωπον), one hypostasis, and one nature. What will Arius, who is enraged, and Apollinaris, who was truly sick with lack of intelligence (ἄνοια), say to this? For one thought the divine incarnation did not include participation in the soul, and the other that it did not include participation in the intellect. Where then is the redemption of the royal image if God the Word united only flesh or a soul without intellect? And how is this not contrary to reason

that the Word would leave aside what is rational and do us a favor lacking the most essential things?

You see what hidden glory the words of the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον) have shone upon us once they have been examined a little. Let us not depart, then, but persevere in this examination. And when we see a greater glory surpassing and rising above what was previously sought, we will say with Paul: “What was glorious in this part has no glory because of the surpassing glory”. For while our Savior could have cited the reasons previously enumerated showing that He was not bound and not subject to paying the didrachma—since He is the new Adam and the new firstfruits, so to speak, of our race (γένος), the high priest not temporary but eternal, and the one who redeems us from sin by casting an intellectual didrachma—He passes over and silences these reasons as befitting the economy, and He proceeds to a higher and more God-worthy reason (θεοπρεπής). “When they entered Capernaum," it is said, "those who collected the didrachma approached Peter and said: 'Does your teacher not pay the didrachma?' He replied: 'Yes.'“ When they entered Capernaum, which was considered His city because He often stayed and dwelt there—for after John was arrested, He had chosen it instead of Nazareth to dwell in, as Matthew wrote: “Jesus, hearing that John had been delivered up, withdrew into Galilee, and leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea”—then the collectors of the didrachma approached, presenting it especially in His city as a warning to all. They approached with all respect and honor; they did not speak to Him or approach Him immediately but spoke to Peter, not arrogantly as collectors: “Your teacher must pay the didrachma,” but rather gently and modestly: “Does your teacher not pay the didrachma?” But perhaps it will be said that a little irony was also mixed into this question. Because, as has been said, the didrachma tax was collected for the high priests, and they were jealous of Jesus and accused Him of transgressing the Law (νόμος) and violating the Sabbath, perhaps the collectors, serving these quarrelsome (φιλόνικος) and jealous men and sharing a preconceived opinion, also posed the question ironically and said: “Does your teacher not pay the didrachma?” as if to say: “Why does He transgress the Law (νόμος) in this too and not comply with its commandments?” Indeed, the very phrase “Your teacher” seems to contain this implication. In this case, why then did Peter, knowing as a true disciple his Master’s intention—who taught and practiced generosity (ἀφιλαργυρία) and

wanted to pay this tax to fulfill the economy—answer those who questioned him: "Yes"?

Then Jesus Himself comes as God, passing through all that is lofty. After they entered the house, He does not delay to inquire why the collectors came to Peter, since He knew all things, but says to him first: "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect tribute or tax? From their sons or from strangers?" And after Peter answered: "From strangers," Jesus replied: "Then the sons are exempt." By saying "The kings of the earth," He showed that He Himself is especially the Son of the King of heaven, sharing His kingship and receiving the same honor. And by saying "From their sons or from strangers?" He showed that He is His own and true Son, as He was begotten by God the Father according to nature and essence (οὐσία). For one who is a son by adoption is called a son only by grace, but in truth he is a stranger. How then could we call Him, as Arius or Eunomius did, a creature or unlike (ἀνόμοιος) the Father—He who reigns with the Father because He is and is not a stranger but His own and true Son? Or how would the Son and God of God give tribute to the heavenly Father? By this, it was clearly known that the didrachma tax was, according to what has just been said, a legal tax, not a Roman one, given to God, not to Caesar. For if it were so, He would necessarily say: "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's," and not: "Then the sons are exempt." By saying this, He also confirmed Peter's testimony when he was inspired from above by God and cried out: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." After this testimony, Peter had been shaken and filled with fear because of the prediction concerning the crucifixion and the saving passion: he had suffered something human and said: "Far be it from You, Lord! This shall not happen to You," and he had been sharply rebuked: "Get behind me, Satan!" For this reason, Jesus recalled him to this first faith by saying Himself that He is the true Son of God and showing that by this rebuke He had condemned weak fear, not the divine testimony revealed to Peter not by flesh and blood but by the heavenly Father. Yet after this was said and shown, why does He who is exempt, the true Son of the Father and God of God, still say: "But, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. When you have opened its mouth, you will find a stater (στατήρ). Take that and give it to them for Me and you"?"

The phrase “lest we offend them” clearly teaches us not to offend our brothers concerning the gift of gold, “but to despise riches only if we are not entrusted with the care and guardianship of the affairs of the poor, the orphans, or others.” For we must not practice perfection (ἀκτημοσύνη) at the expense of others’ goods, but we must observe equity according to the rules of justice, and on the other hand, we must not under the pretext (πρόφασις) of piety (εὐσέβεια) engage in endless disputes and covet what is not owed to us. Moreover, by this we also learn, according to Paul’s word, “to render to all what is due, tribute to whom tribute is due, tax to whom tax is due.” But if the collectors spoke with a kind of irony, serving the jealous prejudice of the high priests, as I have said, and said of Him as one transgressing the Law (νόμος): “Does your teacher not pay the didrachma?” then the phrase “lest we offend them,” said to avoid giving them occasion or a pretext for accusation, should be seen as containing a jest (εἰρωνεία). “I have not come,” He said, “to abolish the Law (νόμος) but to fulfill it.” Because of this, He also said to John: “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” That the divine Book calls the observance of the Law (νόμος) "righteousness," Paul testified by writing of himself: “As to the righteousness of the Law (νόμος), I was blameless.” In this respect, our Lord spoke and acted similarly. Earlier, when the Pharisees were needlessly (εἰκῇ) offended, He commanded to despise them, teaching us to disregard those who oppose spiritual teaching and divine laws (νόμος) and to heed only God, letting them voice their complaints.

The phrase “Go to the sea, cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. When you have opened its mouth, you will find a stater (στατήρ)” shows that He is the author, creator, and master of the sea and all it contains, as well as of every element (στοιχεῖον), as the true Son of God the Father. And in this too is hidden a mysterious word that brings glory to God who spoke it, who alone is wise and gives understanding of what He is through a small drop grasped by us, though it is impossible to say how great is all the wealth of study (θεωρία) placed in the sacred words and known to Him. For because He had said to Peter and his brother Andrew: “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men,” and to Peter alone: “Do not fear; from now on you will catch men,” He made this divine and astonishing command the proof of an equally astonishing catch. For this fish is a figure (τύπος) of the Church, once covered by the salt and unbelief of idolatry, sunk deep as in an

abyss, and drowned in the tumult and agitation of worldly desires, but now risen by the hook of the Apostles—by the word that teaches, catches, and captures for the knowledge of God, "who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." Concerning this catch of the Apostles, Jeremiah also prophesied, saying: "Behold, I send many fishers, says the Lord, and they shall catch them." These men, once caught—though they were more mute than fish—and instructed by the word of truth that opened their mouths, sprouted and produced such teachers of the Church that they bore on their lips words far more precious than gold and silver. For He said: "Take the first fish that comes up," to show by the word "comes up" the depth of error from which we have risen, and by "first" the ease and effortless action of teaching, since the moment the spiritual hook was cast, the catch followed immediately. To show that this catch was a mystery and the fulfillment of a symbol (τύπος), not just a miracle, He did not say: "You will find in this fish a stater (στατήρ) already swallowed and in its belly," but: "When you have opened its mouth, you will find (a stater)," showing that the fish held the stater (στατήρ) in its mouth, executing the divine command: "All things are possible with God," and revealing the gift of teaching that those caught by the Gospel hook of the Apostles would carry on their lips.

We must also understand that the stater (στατήρ) is a kind (εἶδος) of denarius (δηνάριον), whether of gold or silver, replacing the tax for Jesus and Peter. That the doctrine of God's words and judgments is likened to gold and silver is made known to us by the divine Books, which say: "The judgments of the Lord are true and justified altogether; they are more desirable than gold and much more than precious stone," and: "The tongue of the righteous is choice silver," and: "The words of the Lord are pure words, silver tried in the earth." The phrase "Take that and give it to them for Me and you" shows that Peter too was a firstborn and similarly subject to the didrachma tax, whom his Master placed on the same level as Himself, honoring him as the head and leader (πρωτοστάτης) of the Apostles and also suggesting higher things by this very fact. For though by nature He was exempt, knew no sin, and was innocent (ἀναίτιος) in all things, He paid the didrachma tax, showing that He must also endure death in the flesh, not because He was bound to die, but because He fulfilled the economy for us. Hence, He united Peter with Himself and said: "Take that and give it to them for Me and you," proclaiming through the symbol (τύπος) itself: "Let the debt of sin be paid

according to the economy for Me, and in truth for you and for all humanity." That is why the divine Book calls His death, considered in relation to us, a debt, saying: "The record of sin was torn up by Him," and in relation to the Redeemer and Deliverer, a price (τιμή): "For you were bought at a great price (τιμή); do not become slaves of men."

I wished now to proceed to the other words of the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον), but I see that the homily has exceeded its measure. And you do not tire of listening; yet Proverbs also warns us to know the measure even in such matters, saying: "When you find honey, my son, eat what is sufficient, lest you vomit when you are full." Remembering this, I will end the homily. Since Christ, though exempt and not bound, paid the debt for us—both in the symbol (τύπος) of the didrachma and in the economy of the saving passion—and since we, though debtors of countless debts, forget them all, should I omit that we ought to pay to Him who paid the debt for us, to Him who redeemed, to Him who delivered? Do we not see that our debtors, we who act fraudulently, wander here and there in the square, having as proof of their debts not promissory notes written in corners and narrow alleys, but heavenly Scriptures against which there is no objection, crying: "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none"? And you who have many, do not give the poor even a worn piece; and by the variety of clothes you wear in turn and display differently according to the season, you want to be noticed and praised, for your concern is not primarily (μᾶλλον) to be warm and covered but to be seen. Yet truly, for this reason, the divine Book called clothes "coverings," saying: "When we have food and covering, let us be content," to teach us that they serve only necessity, not ostentation. But you disregard the divine words, which are far higher and better than gold and precious stone and more radiant and brighter than silver, words whose mark the fish of the Gospels bore in its mouth—and you disregard them neither in reading, nor in thought, nor in good works. You have hands glittering with gold rings; how will you hide them before the terrible tribunal (βῆμα) of Christ, when they will accuse your avarice and be accused by the debtors you now turn away from, though they are naked? That it is good to do good to the needy, you do not ignore. That is why, often too, when you bend toward one in such a state, you bring him to me and say: "Give to him; enroll him among the widows or the aged." Is this piety (εὐσέβεια)? Then tell me, is it to me, and not at all to yourself, that you know to advise what concerns piety (εὐσέβεια)? But I, by

what you see, have no need of your advice, as the crowd of poor who constantly surround me attests. As for you, I do not know how you close your ears to your own words and how you are to yourself a counselor either mute or unable to persuade; for either you say nothing at all to yourself, or when you say it, you do not listen, because you are already seized by the cursed passion of avarice (φιλαργυρία) and economy. Yet if you had to buy some precious good, you would first consider yourself; but when the kingdom of heaven is offered to you at such an easy price, you go to advise another and neglect to advise yourself. I have been compelled to say this not to burden you but rather to deliver you from the weight of coming wrath and to spur you by the goads of the word to prepare yourselves for eternal life. May it come to pass that we all obtain it by the grace and love (φιλανθρωπία) of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be praise with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 82 ON THE WORDS OF THE GOSPEL THAT FOLLOW THOSE EXAMINED IN THE PREVIOUS HOMILY: ON THAT DAY, THE DISCIPLES APPROACHED JESUS, SAYING, "WHO, THEN, IS THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?" (Matt. 18:1) AND ON THE REST. TABLE OF CONTENTS

A spiritual and abundant table of the evangelical books pushes me anew to enjoy the divine thoughts placed in the sacred words; and, rendering the searching eye of my spirit particularly sharp and penetrating, it cries out to me this warning from Proverbs, saying: “Open your eyes, and be filled with bread” (Prov. 20:13). For those who see little are nourished with milk; and before those who have acquired the habit of being able, in a way, to open wide their intellectual eyes, the complete nourishment of bread is served, which feeds through contemplation (“θεωρία”) and satisfies the intelligence, and does not fatten the belly. Let us learn, then, what are the words that follow those we first examined: “On that day, the disciples approached Jesus, saying, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Matt. 18:1). It is with much accuracy and observation that the text has recorded this (word): “On that day”, teaching us the cause of the question. Indeed, because our Savior had honored Peter during the payment of the didrachma by uniting Himself to him and saying, “Give it to them for me and for you” (Matt. 17:26), immediately, on that very day, the other disciples suffered something human, falling into the passion of jealousy.

But you might say, "Let that pass; are you suggesting that the Apostles were overcome by a passion?" — Yes, I say, and I am not at all ashamed, so that you may be struck with admiration either by the humility and virtue of the disciples or by the divinity and sublimity of the One who taught them. For by nature they too were men, they shared the same clay as we do, they had Adam as their first father; their spirit, which “was inclined to evil from their youth” (Gen. 8:21), as it is written, they gradually withdrew and brought it out of the clay through practical education, instructions, and the teachings of their Master, and they washed the old man; by dint of walking, they rose to such a height that they were no longer regarded as men and left us no excuse, we who are of their race (“γένος”), while we cowardly show indifference and negligence and do not attain the same degree, or rather (“μᾶλλον δέ”), not even a shadow or a very small appearance

(“φαντασία”) in this march toward heavenly things. Yet at that moment, as they had very imperfect dispositions, they seemed to have been jealous of Peter because of the honor he had received and could not bear philosophically (“φιλοσόφως”) this mark of favor, they who later reached such perfection that in writing they even acknowledged themselves as publicans and sinners and engraved in (their) writings as on a column the virtues of the Apostles who were their companions. That is why we find that the Evangelist (“Εὐαγγελιστής”) Mark, who is the disciple of Peter and who knew the humility and contempt for glory (“ἀφιλοδοξία”) of his master, passed over in silence and did not report at all in (his) book the great deeds of the latter, “such as the beatitude he heard from the mouth of our Savior when He said, "You are blessed, Simon, son of Jonah; for flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 16:17); “nor when He said, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church” (Matt. 16:18); “nor, "I will give you the keys (“κλείς”) of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:19); “nor when he received the order, "Go to the sea” (Matt. 17:26); “nor that he cast the hook, caught the fish, found the stater, and received the honor of being united to Christ by these words that commanded him: "Give this for me and for you.” While he passed over all these elevating facts, he mentions (Peter's) failings, namely that he was rebuked by (Jesus), that he heard, “Get behind me, Satan” (Matt. 16:23), that he feared a little servant girl and denied (Christ) three times. But those who were such and such and who, through a humble spirit, had attained, as far as is possible for men, the imitation of Jesus the Savior God, who emptied Himself and took the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7), touched at that moment by the sting of jealousy because Peter had heard, “Give this for me and for you,” questioned Christ: “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” See how even their own failings raise “questions and indications that add to the virtue they were taught.” They discuss, in fact, priority and the greatest place (“τάξις”) in the kingdom of heaven, while we ourselves have among us a contrary and bad rivalry, (namely) who will plunge deepest into the earth, roll in the mud, and grow the thorns of worldly cares? Who will build a splendid house and add to what he has what he does not have, and moreover plunder the (goods) of his neighbor? Who will forcibly take the usufruct of a property that does not belong to him and sometimes act violently to drive away the widow and the orphan? For I blush to cite further the entertainments and disputes animated by jealousy (“φθόνος”) that (occur) in horse races and on the stage, as well as shared and opposing affections; I see, in fact, that those who

indulge in these (passions) and are intoxicated by this deep drunkenness are not even sensible to earthly affairs, much less will they be sensible to the kingdom of heaven.

But Jesus, the physician and author of our souls, did not even approve of the disciples' jealousy for good. On the one hand, indeed, we must be jealous for good and progress; and on the other hand, we must think that the successes of our brothers are our own; for it is especially in beautiful actions that seem (good) that Satan hides his hidden nets. That is why Cain also disputed with his brother a good race—for it was the sacrifice, the gift to God, and the offering that were the concern of both—but from this good jealousy and emulation for what is perfect, he fell into the worst envy, which in truth gave birth to the first murder and stained the fraternal hand; and he would not have suffered this if, out of love for the first place and vain glory, he had not thought that the praise (“κλέος”) of Abel was foreign to him and not his own. That is why, as Christ wanted to uproot this passion from the heart of (His) disciples, He said, pronouncing this word according to the order (“τάξις”) (used) for the affirmation of oaths: “Amen, I say to you; unless you change and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3). What is this (word): “Amen”, I say to you? "Amen," translated from Hebrew into Greek, means, "Let it be so!" This, then, is what this (word) means: “Amen, I say to you”; it is as if He said, "What must necessarily be, I say to you; for it results from my words that something must be." The creation and formation at the beginning of this world also attest that they are accomplished by the divine word, because something was. For “God said, "Let there be light," and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). “Let there be a firmament! Let there be luminaries!" And all this was!” (Gen. 1:6, 14). Likewise, when He wanted to show that His words never pass and to cast His listeners into fear, He said in the prophets: “It is by myself that I have sworn” (Isa. 45:23; Jer. 22:5), using, for our sake, the form (“σχῆμα”) of oaths in a manner worthy of men (“ἀνθρωποπρεπῶς”). So here too He pronounced (this word): “Amen, I say to you”, instead of: "I swear by my words, which must necessarily result in fact, that you must believe them as what has already been and not as what is merely said." That is why we too add the (word) "Amen" to praise, for all that comes from Him, seeing that it has been and is now and believing that it must necessarily be.

He did not say, “Unless you become like little children,” but: “Unless you change and become like little children” (Matt. 18:3). This (word): “Unless you change”, means that we must renounce the old and passion-filled man and turn away from him completely; if someone forgets this even imperfectly, he cannot become like a very young child. For Christ also came to cleanse and wash the old model (“τὸ παλαιὸν πλάσμα”) and to show our nature renewed, without spot, wrinkle, or anything like it. That is why Paul said: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). To "change," then, is to forget old and evil habits. Thus, the prophet David also sang: “Do not remember our ancient iniquities” (Ps. 78:8). For that this (word) "change" indicates transformation into a new life and the different condition (“κατάστασις”) (leading) to what is perfect, the divine Samuel made known when he said to Saul: “The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, you will prophesy, and you will be changed into another man” (1 Sam. 10:6). And the sacred Book, “confirming this, also said: And God gave him another heart” (1 Sam. 10:9). There is also the change from good to evil, which was prefigured by Lot's wife, who turned back toward Sodom and became a pillar of salt, and against which it was prescribed and commanded to the disciples, and it was set as a rule by Christ that we must guard ourselves and flee it, when He spoke thus: “Remember Lot's wife” (Luke 17:32); and again: “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

After the Apostles underwent a change opposite to that (just mentioned), that they did not look back at all and did not return to anything belonging to the old and unclean life—for this is what this (word) means, that they change and become like little children—when after the resurrection they received the Holy Spirit from our Savior by insufflation and henceforth attained the new man who is renewed according to the image of Him who created him (Col. 3:10), they were addressed: “Children, do you have anything to eat?” (John 21:5). Examine how, like a physician, He made a deep incision in this ulcer, so “that it would no longer have anything to gnaw on, causing pain.” For He did not say, “Whoever changes and becomes like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven,” but: “Unless you change, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3). "You," He says, "are arguing about priority and dreaming of the first place (“τάξις”); but beware lest you need much sweat to barely obtain entry into the kingdom."

Matthew, then, said that the disciples asked this question: “Who is the greatest?” (Matt. 18:1). Luke, that they thought (who was the greatest), and Mark, that they discussed among themselves (who was the greatest) (Mark 9:33). The (facts) stated by each of them are different; but all three are true and occurred in this disposition and order (“τάξις”); for first (the disciples) thought, second they discussed among themselves as if examining together and debating, third they were led to ask the question; each of the writers, narrating only one of the (facts) that followed one another, told the truth. For there is no accusation (“κατηγορία”) of lying or any contradiction in someone saying something incompletely and abridged; for there is a contradiction if someone overturns by an opposite account what is said by others, but not if he says what others have omitted. This, indeed, is proper to historical narratives, so that often the same man, recounting the same story to many (listeners) at different times, does not recall everything incompletely at all times, but what he had omitted for one he adds for another, and what had been clearly recounted at another time is shortly after enveloped in oblivion.

I can quickly show this with the help of the Book of Acts (“Πράξεις”). Luke, who recalled three times in the same writing the account (of what happened) on the road to Damascus, sometimes narrating it himself, sometimes twice putting Paul on stage recounting it in each account, returns “on the one hand to the same facts in a concordant and not at all contradictory manner, and on the other hand he removes or adds necessarily to what is said elsewhere, without harming the truth in any way or offering any hold to falsehood.” For it is written sometimes: “Paul heard the voice saying, "I am Jesus whom you persecute” (Acts 9:4-5); sometimes: “I am Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 22:8); and sometimes that it was in the Hebrew language that he heard the voice coming to him; sometimes simply: “A light from heaven shone around him” (Acts 9:3); sometimes: “At midday” (Acts 22:6); and: “(A light brighter than the sun” (Acts 26:13); now: “The men traveling with Paul stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing nothing” (Acts 9:7); now: “They saw the light and were afraid, but did not hear the voice of the one speaking” (Acts 22:9). For among those accompanying him, some perceived the voice and not likewise the light, and others (perceived) the light and not likewise the voice, although “both (phenomena) had equally occurred.” These things and the like can often happen in narratives and do not harm the truth at all. If, then, the same (Luke),

recounting the same fact, reported it so differently without lying, what is surprising if, when there are several Evangelists (“Εὐαγγελισταί”), one has recorded in writing what another omitted, without at all rejecting and accusing “of contradiction what he himself had not reported?”

We must know—for now I will bring the discourse back to the (text) cited above—that Mark and Luke wrote that Jesus said to the disciples: “Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will not enter it” (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17). — "What then!" you will say, "does He ask us to be like bleating sheep and to be in the disposition of not using examination regarding the words about the kingdom of heaven?" — Not at all. But, according to the word of Matthew—for what he says reveals and illuminates the force of the commandment—He asks you to change, to destroy the life that has grown old in sins, and to take up by new works of righteousness a completely young and new spirit, as if it were ignorant and free from malice. The passion in question that He wanted to heal was, in “fact, jealousy, envy, love of vain glory; that is why He brought forward a very young child, of the youngest age, untouched by insult and not swollen by praise (“κλέος”) or applause. (It follows) from this that, when He said by way of example, holding him in His hands: “Whoever receives a little child like this in my name receives me” (Matt. 18:5)—for whoever is no longer like this, who has surpassed this age and simplicity of soul and now has a sense of malice, has lost the image of the little child and has ceased to serve as an example—He rightly said: “He receives me.” For whoever has nothing old in him but renews himself like a little child through virtues is also the imitator of Christ, just as Paul who says: “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1), and like John who writes: “Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, as He is pure” (1 John 3:3). In fact, that it is only to drive away wickedness and to repress pride that He presented the example of the little child, and not to show the intelligence and wisdom with which we must approach the words of faith and the preaching of the kingdom of heaven, He made known, He who clearly distinguished here and said: “Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:4), and who in another place very well distinguished and said: “Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matt. 10:16). For, concerning the head, which is faith, we must use wisdom, following the example of the serpent, which takes great care not to be struck on the head, without

worrying as much when its other members are struck; and we must imitate the gentleness of the dove, as I said, by distancing ourselves from wickedness and by the ways of acting in life. Paul, adhering to this division and (this) distinction, also wrote to the Corinthians: “Brothers, do not be children in your thinking, but in evil be infants, and in your thinking be mature” (1 Cor. 14:20). For, although (God) has hidden the great riches of the mystery from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to us, while we are little children (Matt. 11:25), He nevertheless pushes us to the perfection of thoughts. Under the pretext that Wisdom, having mixed the flask (“λέγανος”) of teaching and prepared the spiritual table, cried out loudly: “Let the simple turn in here” (Prov. 9:4), and said to those who lack sense: “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed for you” (Prov. 9:5), He does not command that those who have been called persist in the same folly (“ἀνοια”)—for what use, indeed, would this call or this nourishment be?—but He adds: “Forsake foolishness, and live, and walk in the way of understanding” (Prov. 9:6). For if by this we are ordered to pursue the condition of the little child, how could Paul say: “We speak wisdom among the mature, a hidden and secret wisdom” (1 Cor. 2:6-7); and: “But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16); and “again: “As you read, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3:4)?

It is fitting that we inquire why our Lord and God Jesus Christ did not suffice to say (to His disciples): “Unless you change and become like little children”, but (why), having first brought this little child, He placed him in their midst and (why) He used such words. It is because He wanted thereby to make His teaching very clear and (very) evident to them, to touch and unveil mainly the passion that had burdened them and to place the remedy before their eyes, that He “did this.” Indeed, we can see that for this (same) reason the prophets also often performed similar (actions): that Jeremiah breaks a potter's vessel (Jer. 19), while those concerned by the word of prophecy watched, and that Ezekiel once draws Jerusalem on a brick, another time takes an iron plate (“πέτανον”), another time shaves the hair of his head and (the hair) of his beard, burns a part, cuts another part little by little, and throws another part into the air (Ezek. 4:1-3, 5:1-4), to “show the capture” and destruction of Jerusalem. Because our Savior, having alluded to this jealousy the disciples had felt toward Peter, had said this word concerning scandals and had shown that scandals arise not only from hatred toward brothers but also from an evil affection, He then presents the remedy for the

resulting illness, saying: “If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away from you” (Matt. 18:8). "Do," He says, “the same” if “your eye also causes you to sin” (Matt. 18:9). He establishes this as a law (“νόμος”) concerning affections governed by a disposition (“ἕξις”) of the hand and the eye, and He does not arm us against our own members; for if you do not cut off the evil affection, not only will you lose yourself, but you will not save (your member). That we are in the condition (“ἕξις”) of members relative to one another, Paul has attested, saying: “We are members of one another” (Eph. 4:25). What is surprising (about this remedy), when indeed the Old Testament (“Διαθήκη”) prescribes mercy for one's own soul and orders, when someone causes sin, not only to cut him off but even to put him to death? In Deuteronomy (“Δευτερονόμιον”), Moses wrote: “If your brother, the son of your father or of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, entices you secretly, saying, "Let us go and serve other gods," which neither you nor your fathers have known, some of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him, but you shall kill him” (Deut. 13:6-9). These are the members our Savior ordered to be cut off when they cause sin, because in the splendor of the resurrection in the kingdom of heaven, nature will receive what is complete, and there no one will be one-eyed, lame, or defective in body or whose members are afflicted by another wound. For if it were so, it would follow that the martyrs who were dismembered limb by limb would find themselves, in a way, without a body and deprived of flesh. The resurrection, indeed, is a new return to the first (condition); for it is said: “You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; and you renew the face (“πρόσωπον”) of the earth” (Ps. 104:30). Would the potter who fashions his vessel fashion it very well, and God who forms His creature anew leave it lacking principal members? Since we know this, let us flee jealousy, love of vain glory, and evil affections hated by God, so that, completely delivered from scandals, we may obtain the kingdom of heaven through Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be praise with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

**HOMILY 83 ON THE NATIVITY OR THE EPIPHANY. THIS IS THE FOURTH (HOMILY). IT WAS DELIVERED INSIDE THE ORATORY OF THE VIRGIN MARY, HOLY AND MOTHER OF GOD, AFTER IT HAD BEEN ENLARGED DURING ITS RESTORATION THANKS TO THE MUNIFICENCE OF THE PIOUS EMPEROR ANASTASIUS.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

When the angels, tell me, cry out: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men” (Luke 2:14), could we remain silent and stand still and mute like stones? And how would it not be unreasonable that on one hand the armies who (dwell) in the heights rejoice because of us, and on the other hand we, who are the occasion of this joy, who stand below and have been raised, still stand below in our thoughts and are insensitive to divine help, without rising at the same time with the incorporeal and intellectual militia of the servants of light and without glorifying God, not only with the tongue but also by considering with the intelligence the greatness of the words of this glorification and of this angelic song? Let us learn, indeed, what this means: “Glory to God in the highest”. “For,” they say, “it is not because He humbled Himself in love that we will address to Him a glorification different from what we habitually offered in the heights. Indeed, if, when He descended to earth, He had ceased to be on high and renounced it, we too would necessarily bring a diminution and a change to the glorification offered to Him as God; but if, when He came bodily to earth, He incorporeally and without any limitation fills what is in the heights and if there is absolutely nothing empty of Him—for He remains in the divine elevations without having changed or diminished what He was, even when He became man—we too remain in the same glorification and the same service, without diminishing or changing anything. But, as we stand near the royal and lofty throne, we do not forget our position and our condition, or rather, because of this immeasurable descent, we recognize our height, giving as manifest proof the peace that (reigns) on earth, just as when all under heaven shines, it is equally impossible to say that the sun does not appear.”

Let us see, to know this immense sea of peace, what the war was. God turned His face away from the human race, first when Adam transgressed the commandment, when he was outside Paradise, when he was driven from the dwelling toward the

east and moved far from the divine light; for this is what the prohibition to dwell toward the east means. “Where he hid, he was unable to approach God and said: “I heard Your voice as You walked in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid” (Genesis 3:10). Thus, those who are weak close their eyes before a ray of sun that strikes them, unable to bear its sight. Then, when sin prevailed, when shameful passions enveloped the intelligence, and when the divine and rational image in us was no longer visible, to the point that man was recognizable only by the flesh, or rather, he had lost (the ability) to be recognized as man.” A cruel and miserable sentence was cried from on high, saying: “My Spirit shall not abide in these men forever, for they are flesh” (Genesis 6:3). Is this war, where we fought against God, insignificant? Is it bearable for those who feel to hear this (word): “My Spirit shall not abide among these men”? Because of this, there was the flood that swept away and engulfed in the midst of sins the entire race, except Noah and his sons, who were left as sparks of fire to rekindle what was extinguished and to fill the whole earth—which also happened. But there was also the forgetting of God’s love (“philanthropy”), the power, strength, and dominion of sin, the crowd of evils, the crackling of fires directed against Sodom, and the torments that are their brothers, the rest, pacification, and teaching mixed with this torment, the support of the Law contained in the Books of Moses, the rod of the prophets that straightened the bent and confirmed warnings through prophetic predictions and the astonishing fulfillment of things to come, the words that the Father who loves His children (addressed) to ungrateful and rightly hated servants with all-compassionate pity and a reproachful spirit: “O My people, what have I done to you? Or how have I wearied you? Answer Me” (Micah 6:3). And again: “Turn to Me, and you will be saved, all you ends of the earth. For I am God, and there is no other” (Isaiah 45:22). “Listen to Me, you whose heart is lost, you who are far from righteousness; I have brought near My righteousness, and it will not delay, and I will not delay the salvation that comes from Me” (Isaiah 46:12-13).

As these words “were not heard and remained without effect, and (men) resisted and kicked, when they should have obeyed, immediately another kind of words is presented, which on one hand takes forms worthy of men and yet on the other is filled with sadness, which again calls (men) who feel no pain and can move even a stony soul: “The heavens were astonished at this, and the earth trembled greatly, says the Lord, for My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me,

the fountain of living water, and dug for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:12-13). And again with this: "Have I been a wilderness to Israel, or a land of darkness? Why do My people say, 'We will no longer come under Your dominion, we will no longer return to You'? Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me for days without number" (Jeremiah 2:31-32). As these and similar (words) were spoken but not heard, and as prophets were constantly raised and sent, while all was useless and without profit and a greater help was needed, He who sent the prophets was sent, in that He became flesh, that is, man, and came into this world bodily, while filling it divinely, or rather leading and holding it, for "He upholds all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3). Thus it is written that "He came to His own" (John 1:11), He who said: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58). And again, when He was a child, He was laid in a manger, "because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). He who is "in the form of God" took "the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:6-7), as it is written, when on one hand He partook of the same essence ("ousia") as us and was hypostatically united to the flesh endowed with an intelligent soul, and on the other hand He came in our likeness in all things except sin alone (Hebrews 4:15), even to the appearance, the size of limbs, and the gait, having nothing prodigious or marvelous or different or particularly very large in the body, unlike the giants spoken of in tales. Paul also shows this, saying: "He was found in appearance as a man" (Philippians 2:7). Leave aside, indeed, the divine miracles He performed, comparing the manifestation of His divinity with the growth and increase of His bodily size; for, as He became man without change and in truth, so the same was also God by nature. Let us not accept miracles to suppress and destroy the flesh, nor human measures and voluntary poverty to deny and remove divinity; let us send back to those who worship man ("anthropolatry") and to the Phantasiasts this wicked half-inheritance ("hemikleron") and this impiety that divides. As for us, let us walk the middle of the royal road, turning our face from the crooked paths on both sides and knowing that He who is in the heights and by nature in the greatness worthy of God ("theoprepeia") emptied Himself, that He who sent men whose office was to serve us became Himself man and servant, and that He became Himself the author of our salvation, saying: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45). And He who addressed through the prophets

these extensive words full of divine doctrine to those in an incurable state did not frustrate (their) hope; but He increased His goodness much more when, without change, He became what we are; and, when He mingled Himself with those who disobeyed, He cried the word He had foretold through Isaiah, (a word) salutary and more loving ("philanthropic") than all, fitting Him alone: "It is I who speak; behold, I am here" (Isaiah 52:6).

Who then would worthily praise the immeasurable grace of such a benefit ("energeia")? Or, even among the most ungrateful, who could face these so evident and clear words of the God-inspired Books to oppose? Unless they close their ears, what Jew would dispute, saying: "It is not the God of the prophets who became man," when He who spoke through them said: "It is I who speak; behold, I am here" (Isaiah 52:6)? It is beneficial for us to also learn the reason why He descended to all this love ("philanthropy"); for He states and makes it very clear: "I have chosen Israel for Myself among all nations" (cf. Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2), having led them by the Law, instructed them by prophetic revelations, and strengthened them by wonders and miracles, so that through them the knowledge of God might also pass to other men. But all resulted in the opposite. For when they disputed, resisted, disobeyed, were called and did not answer, but fell into the error of demons, My name was especially blasphemed among the nations. Therefore, I who once spoke through the prophets, now, behold, I am present, not with one people alone, but with all men, so that, by a contrary arrangement, through the calling of the nations, My people may know My name."

But He says to the circumcised who believed the Gospel among whom are each of the Apostles, who traversed with their beautiful feet a certain portion of the inhabited earth: "Proclaim peace! Proclaim good!" (Isaiah 52:7), coming not by a flat and smooth path but by the inaccessible mountains of the nations' idolatry, which were rougher and harder than all, and by the hard-to-change habits ("dysmetathetos") of ancestral error, so that those who leap on these (mountains), who pass from one to another successively, and who preach the salvation that appeared in Zion and the God who reigned over her by His coming in the flesh may seem more beautiful. For it is in those who know Him that it is understood and said that God reigns. I will quote the very words of the sacred Books that can best make the richness of this goodness shine in you, and they are expressed thus:

“Thus says the Lord: Because of you, My name is continually blasphemed among the nations. Therefore, on that day, My people will know My name, that it is I who speak; behold, I am here. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace! For I will make heard your salvation, saying to Zion: Your God reigns. The voice of your watchmen is lifted up; together they sing for joy, for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted His people; He has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Isaiah 52:5-10).

When the angels saw this salvation and this peace, they sang with celestial and poetic joy: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace” (Luke 2:14). For it is to those who were disobedient, resistant, and perhaps proud enough to flee far from Him for a long time that He came of His own will, often calling and not being heard at all. The voice of those who guard Zion—the voice of the prophets, which was enveloped and hidden and had become almost imperceptible—was lifted by the coming of Christ in the flesh; it spread and passed to the nations, rejoiced in the result, leaped for joy, and wanted to jump, though it was once downcast and sad because it was neither heard nor obeyed. And what excellently exalted the glory of the Most High, whether by the angels or by us, is not only that peace existed on earth but also that there is goodwill (“eudokia”) among men. For He not only reconciled with us as with enemies, nor did He make peace with us as with those who fought against Him in a merciless war; but, like one who desires and pursues with His love those who should be hated, and as if we had pleased Him by good deeds, He became man to straighten our nature. For goodwill (“eudokia”) consists in what has pleased and seemed (good), and in what someone chooses for himself, not driven by necessity or any other motive but (by the consideration) that he himself has experienced and tested what is most beautiful and lovable. For is it not love that He once mixed the divine image—I mean the intelligent soul—with clay and made man a rational being, and that in the end, because this image was enveloped by the cloud and spirit of the flesh, without change He Himself became flesh, that is, man; and that He who from the beginning formed the creature in His own image submitted to be formed from the Virgin? For that it is He who was born of the Virgin, Isaiah, foreseeing with his own eyes what was to come and pointing

to the Virgin with his finger, so to speak—and this from his time—said: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). Now “Immanuel” is interpreted “God with us,” according to the word of the angel who appeared to Joseph in a dream (Matthew 1:23); therefore, He who was born of the Virgin was “God with us.” But the unfaithful Jews, who twist what is straight and in this oppose the Holy Spirit, say that some who interpreted the divine Books transmitted: “Behold, a young woman (shall conceive),” and not: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive.” A young woman is a married woman who has known her husband. But the divine Books perfectly give even a virgin the name of young woman, as it is written in Deuteronomy about the violent outrage against a girl in a deserted place: “The betrothed young woman cried out, and there was no one to save her” (Deuteronomy 22:27); for it is certain she cried out while still a virgin, before the one who took her by force had outraged her. In Judges also, (the writer) clearly says the same: “You shall sacrifice”, he says, “every woman who has known the couch of a man, and you shall save every young virgin” (Judges 21:11). And among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, they found four hundred young virgins who had not known a man lying with a woman (Judges 21:12). In Kings also, we find that Abishag (1 Kings 1:1-4), who served David and warmed him in his old age, is called a young woman, though she was a virgin. And then, let those who scrutinize the words of Scripture and turn away from it and its meaning explain to us how the prophet says: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign” (Isaiah 7:14), and continues: “Behold, a young woman shall conceive”; for what sign is there in a married woman giving birth? A sign, indeed, consists in the indication of a marvelous fact that goes beyond the limits of nature. It is therefore a virgin who gave birth, even if you do not wish it—and the sign designated in the prophecy has been fulfilled—and she bore Immanuel. For it was fitting, and very seemly, for a virgin, and not for a (woman) who knows the conjugal couch of her husband, to have such a divine childbirth.

Be ashamed, then, both by this very expression of “sign” and by the designation of “Immanuel,” so that you may regard as a virgin she who gave birth and as God incarnate He who was born; may the subsequent God-inspired words of the prophecy increase your faith, that it may be so for you! What does (Isaiah) say about the one who is born?—”He shall eat curds and honey” (Isaiah 7:15). As soon as He is born, as a child, taking His mother’s breast, He is nourished by her milk,

not by curds and honey; He therefore calls “curds” and “honey” the milk of the young woman who is the Virgin “Mother of God, (milk) young, valiant, strong, and curdled, which does not descend from voluptuousness, intercourse with man, softness, or dissolution and has nothing bitter from sin, the venom, or the serpent’s deceit, but flows from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin, from whom comes the germination of Immanuel’s birth. The ox, indeed, is the sign of strength and vigor, as it is written in Proverbs: “Where there are many crops, there the strength of the ox is manifest” (Proverbs 14:4). Honey resembles “the quality and taste of spiritual food”. Hence Ezekiel, having swallowed the divine scroll of the book, also said: “In my mouth it was as sweet as honey” (Ezekiel 3:3). But above, on one hand, the prophet ate intellectually—for it was impossible to swallow a scroll otherwise—and here, on the other hand, Immanuel was nourished by milk sensibly and truly, when without sin He passed through all our (states), to destroy and remove from all (these ways of being) sin and the curse and to plant blessing and holiness. Let not those “who are sick with the error of the Phantasiasts pass so lightly over what has been said, everywhere dishonestly altering the truth of the economy, to the point of turning away from true salvation”. But it is not without purpose that the Virgin, from whom the new Adam was formed and by whose milk and honey He was nourished, is called “a land flowing with milk and honey.” The prophet continued about her: “Before He knows or chooses evil, He will choose the good” (Isaiah 7:15), for before the child knows good or evil, He despises evil to choose the good. Each of us, examined in childhood, is not conscious of good and evil; it is when time advances that he begins to discern them. But since Immanuel was by nature also God and goodness itself, though He became a child according to the economy, He did not wait for the time of discernment; on the contrary, from the swaddling clothes, says (Isaiah), before reaching the age capable of discerning good and evil, on one hand He despised evil and did not obey it, and on the other He chose the good. These (words): “He despised” and “He did not obey” and this (other): “He chose” show us that the “Word of God united hypostatically not only the flesh but also the soul endowed with will and reason, to incline our souls, bent toward wickedness, to the choice of good and the aversion to evil; for God, as God, does not choose good, since He is good by essence (“ousia”); but when, because of us, He partook of flesh and the intelligent soul, it was for us that He accomplished this straightening. Indeed, it was also for us that He was baptized, though He is pure and purity itself; it was also for us that He was tempted, though He had no need of

temptation Himself, but He makes easy to overcome for those who must struggle with Him the one who presents the temptation; it was for us that He was crucified, though He is guiltless of sin, and He suspended the death that had tyrannically prevailed over us; it was for us that He was buried and destroyed corruption by the resurrection: all things that the prophet Isaiah grasped at once with his wise spirit and proclaimed by this great word: “A child is born to us” (Isaiah 9:6); for it was for us, and not for Himself, that He was born. Indeed, every man is born for his own advantage, to partake of this light and the knowledge of God; but Christ, “the true light that enlightens every man coming into the world” (John 1:9), had no need of any advantage; on the contrary, it is to us that He procured advantages by the birth according to the flesh: hence what the prophet says, I also say: “A child is born to us” (Isaiah 9:6). The same is also given to us as a Son; for (Christ) is the Son and also the only Word of God the Father. Very fittingly, He joined this (word): “He was given” to (the word): “Son”: for it is a gift, a present, and a benefit of God that the Son and Word is on earth and was born a child of a woman; “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” (James 1:17), says the sacred Book. You see what child the Virgin bore us, and to what abundance of divine thoughts she has led us; for all that concerns this (Virgin) is abundant and exceeds our strength. Therefore, when this temple was enlarged and expanded by the generous hand of the pious and God-loving emperor, who pours out even on those afar, and when the crowd gathered together surpasses and exceeds even the size of the place, and when my discourse seems to exceed measure, though it is but a drop compared to “the infinite richness of thoughts”, I seem to hear the Mother of God say to me these prophetic words: “This place is too narrow for me” (Isaiah 49:20)—add that your discourse is also (too short)—”make me a place to dwell”. It is therefore for you, on one hand, to enlarge and expand this place or to adorn it with excellent materials; and it is by her prayers that I, who am small, may hear Him who said: “Open your mouth, and I will fill it” (Psalm 81:10), “so that you may make still more perfect discourses”.

All of us, however, since we are not anguished by the exact observance of the evangelical commandments but walk joyfully by them, let us say with the psalmist to the incarnate God who saved us: “Your commandment is exceedingly broad” (Psalm 119:96); “You have enlarged my steps under me, and my feet have not slipped. I will pursue my enemies and overtake them, and I will not turn back till

they are destroyed" (Psalm 18:36-37). Our enemies are the Slanderer and the wicked demons who accompany him; we will pursue them if, looking to the Mother of God, we men honor a chaste and honest life; if, you virgins, guard purity as a heavenly good unspotted; if, (women) under the yoke of marriage, you truly and purely preserve the love of your husbands and the love of your children, so that by this the bed where you lie may be kept pure; if charity toward the poor is a common practice for both men and women. For all, there is but one race ("stadion") of perfection, because for man or woman, there is but one salvation, one hope, one adoption conferring the same honor, and also one gift of the Spirit. I do not know why some here have been moved to forbid women from saying the doxology in the office of the psalms; Paul says, "Indeed: "I do not permit a woman to teach" (1 Timothy 2:12), but not to refrain from saying the doxology. For if women were forbidden to say the doxology, by the same logic they would also be forbidden to sing. And if no law (νόμος) prohibits this, would they not also desire it? But I will show you that women "do" say the doxology in the Divine Book. After Pharaoh drowned with his horses and chariots, Moses sang: "Let us praise the Lord, for He is greatly glorified" (Exodus 15:1). And Miriam, the sister of Moses, took a tambourine and led the women in singing: "Let us praise the Lord, for He is greatly glorified" (Exodus 15:21). Thus, the doxology (δόξολογία) is universal—not reserved for men alone. Yet, truly, I do not know how, while seeking to defend women, I have found no advocate (συνήγορος) for them other than Miriam. Therefore, let us set aside human inventions and obey divine laws (νόμος). Let us praise Him who, through the Mother of God, has made the female sex (γένος) worthy of veneration and blessed our birth. To Him be power and glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 84 ON BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN. THIS HOMILY WAS DELIVERED ACCORDING TO CUSTOM INSIDE THE ORATORY OF THE MARTYR IGNATIUS, THE GOD-BEARING. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Just as kings are accustomed to have a fixed and determined day each year, recurring at the same time, when, as if for a battle array, they bring out their soldiers onto a plain, dressed in campaign attire, and recall the theory and study of combat rules—brandishing the spear correctly, drawing the bow skillfully, turning and straightening the shield gracefully to block and deflect blows—so too do we believe that the Lord, who does and produces all things wisely, has ordained that the most cherished commemoration of the great Basil coincides with the beginning of the first month of the year, calculated according to the Roman custom. This month is called January because, in their language, “janua” means "door," so that at the very threshold of the annual cycle, when we have at our head, through his commemoration, the spiritual and divine pontiff who did not betray the power of the holy anointing but possesses it brilliantly as befits and from whom he himself received its luster and splendor, it brings and bestows a blessing upon those who celebrate it and upon the Roman Empire itself, which the Word of God, Jesus Christ, had blessed, for it was during its time that He came in the flesh. From this, it follows that His true servant and minister, coming to us each year through his commemoration and blessings, also proclaims the words of our Lord, which Isaiah had foretold: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me; He has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to call the acceptable year of the Lord.”

It is certain, then, that since the commemoration of the divine and mystically initiated teacher is celebrated on this first day of the year, a seed of blessing is sown, and it will fill the entire year with blessings, bearing fruit for those who celebrate this commemoration with understanding—healing for every kind of brokenness, whether of heart or body; liberation and return through repentance for those enslaved by sin; awakening and the light of knowledge for those blind or doing the works of darkness—so that the entire year may be the acceptable year of the Lord, that is, pleasing, joyful, and agreeable as a sacrifice and offering. I will

continue, for truly Basil, wise with the wisdom of God and bearing the name of the "kingdom of heaven," leads us today, like a king, to an elevated plain—that is, to the height and exaltation of his doctrine, his remarkable life, and his conduct—clothed and adorned, as with a panoply or royal purple, with Gregory the Theologian, who is associated with him in commemoration because he was also united with him in the same education, studies, struggles, and orthodox doctrine. For one and the same Spirit worked in both of them, and one sun of justice illuminated them.

Let us not act more sluggishly than soldiers who perform their service as subordinates. Rather, let each of us show the good commanders and leaders of the troops the spiritual armor he possesses, polishing it brightly, adorning it elegantly, and girding it upon himself, as it is written: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness.” If someone embraces virginity and wholly rejects marital union—whether man or woman—let them continue in this observance and restrain the voluptuous and furious desires of the flesh with the reins of continence, so that they may practice holiness, as the Apostle admonishes, both in body and in spirit. If someone is bound in a chaste and pure marriage, let them make it even more chaste by setting fixed times for the bed of mutual harmony and for prayer by common agreement, so that what occurs may be a clause of the chaste marriage arising from good understanding and unanimous consent, and not a deprivation involving injustice and harm to the shared life, whose ruin is forced separation. We say this not because legitimate marital union is capable of producing defilement to the point of preventing even the raising of hands to God in prayer—for how could an honorable marriage and a pure bed produce defilement?—but because it is pleasing to God that, to honor Him, we often abstain even from what is lawful and pleasurable, not out of necessity but voluntarily, and that we are not entirely given over to desires. For perseverance in ascetic life is holier and more pleasing to God than any sacrifice and every virtue.

And the divine Book is accustomed to call "prayer" not only the supplication and request expressed in words but also every promise made to God, as it is written: “Make your vows to the Lord your God and perform them”, and again: “When you

make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it; it is better for you not to vow than to vow and not fulfill it." But if someone is a father of children, let him come with them into this sacred temple and show the spiritual generals that he raises them with correction and instruction in the Lord, according to the word of Paul, and secures for them a happy life blessed throughout the entire year. And if someone also extends charitable hospitality to strangers and sets a friendly table before them, let him increase in virtue and say with Job: "My door was open to every traveler; the stranger did not lodge outside; I did not eat my bread alone; I covered the naked and did not turn away from those in peril." If someone is in authority, let him carefully inquire after widows and orphans and ensure that no one feels or experiences neglect in his administration. Let the one who shows mercy, like the one who sows in hope, with a joyful soul and a hand full of gifts, drive away all the sorrow of avarice. If someone who owns many goods has debtors unable to pay, let him cultivate for them the prayer that cries: "Forgive us, as we also forgive", addressing Him who will then grant remission richly and abundantly. If someone devotes himself to monastic life, freed from dwelling in the world and inhabiting the desert, meditating on the words: "Let us pass to the heavenly dwellings", let him purify his heart by washing and cleansing it from thoughts that could produce defilement, so that he may see God. If he ascends to spiritual contemplations, let him not stop along the way or in the progress of purification, nor refrain from advancing further, but let him run after the crown of God's higher calling. Let him examine his own actions particularly through Basil's treatises on monastic life and choose what is best in purity.

These are the spiritual arms with which I truly desire you to be armed today, shining brightly, adorning yourselves on the occasion of the commemoration of the wise teachers, as if ascending armed onto a plain in a manner worthy of those who have chosen and placed you in this army. For such is the terrain of perfection—difficult and harsh on one side due to the sweat of labor, yet broad as a plain on the other through the richness of contemplation and the charm of heavenly goods. Since you are thus armed, it is fitting that we too should bring something useful and appropriate to the solemnity. What, then, shall I present to rejoice the teachers, when I too am counted as holding the place of a teacher, if not to expound before you some doctrine profitable for the soul, flowing from the doctrinal source of these masters and not straying from the subject we have set before us?

Let us, therefore, explain in due time the words of the prophet that were just proclaimed to you: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me.” It is Christ, the Word of God, who became incarnate and was made man for us, who speaks these words through the prophet. For while He is the true God of the true God the Father and did not depart from what He was even when He became man without change and in truth, He was anointed with us by the oil of gladness when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove at the Jordan. For it was with oil that kings and priests were anointed symbolically in former times, receiving from it a certain participation in holiness. But it is with the intellectual oil of gladness and the very indwelling of the Spirit that He who was made man for us was anointed, receiving it for us and not for Himself. For after the Spirit had departed and withdrawn from us and did not remain in us because we were flesh, the earth was also filled with sorrow. For how could it not be so, since it was already deprived of fellowship with God, and only occasionally did a prophet—or perhaps a second—happen to receive a small drop or a faint ray of light? Because the Spirit that came upon Christ came as firstfruits upon the whole race and dispelled this sorrow, it is rightly called the oil of gladness and joy, since it possesses within itself love for mankind, universal peace, beneficence, and aid, and is poured out upon all the world. Thus, He says: “The Spirit of the Lord, who proceeds from the Father, is in me by essence, for I am the Word and the Son of the Father. He was upon me because I was incarnate, and according to the economy, I accepted the anointing. For if I had not condescended to become man, it would have been foreign to me to be anointed, since I am God by nature. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me; He has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor.” To those who were poor in the knowledge of God but rich in sins, He preached, saying: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Likewise, He healed the brokenhearted. He proclaimed liberty to the captives, which He also accomplished when He bound the strong one, Satan, who had tyrannically oppressed the human race and prevailed against it, and plundered his goods for us. He also gave sight to the blind when He enlightened those sitting in the darkness of ignorance and the shadow of death. And to sum it all up, He called the acceptable year of the Lord, which truly possesses all that is good and beautiful in its entirety.

How is it necessary to say it? The God of the universe decreed that the week should be honored among the children of Israel because, after creating this visible world in six days, He rested on the seventh day, as it is written, and sanctified it. He commanded them to consecrate it to Him and to perform no work of the flesh but to do and practice all divine and spiritual works, for truly they found it difficult to rise to perfection and apply themselves to it every day. Now, this obligation to honor the "septenary" or week did not reside only in the days but also extended to the count of years. For even the seventh year was likewise sanctified, and they left the land itself uncultivated and unplowed. Moreover, they also counted seven weeks of years, so that in a certain way, this honorific character seems to increase through numbers that are very limited and reproduce a certain cycle by multiplying. But it followed that the forty-ninth year should have been sanctified, for it was also the last of the seventh week of years. However, they did not do this but sanctified the fiftieth year, that is, the eighth year of the seventh week of years, which symbolized the eighth and last day of this passing and transient time and the first of the age to come, which is verified to be one and endless and knows no succession of night. This fiftieth year was called “Jubilee” because it was consecrated to God and was like something vowed to Him—for “Jubilee” is as if one doubled the name of God and said "God-God," since among the Hebrews, God is called “Jah” and “Elah”—so that you may learn thereby how holy this year was, in which there was liberty and remission of all servitude and debt, the abolition of the yoke of slavery, the restoration to its former owners of land that had been sold, and the peaceful and unhindered return to their own place for those who had lost it.  When this fiftieth year was about to arrive, they proclaimed it in the seventh month of the forty-ninth year, on the Day of Atonement, and announced it in advance with the sound of the trumpet.

Because Christ came in the last days, putting an end to this present age and transferring us to the eighth day, that is, the future age that includes the kingdom of heaven, when He united to it the time of His own incarnation, He therefore called it the acceptable year of the Lord and consecrated it according to the example of the fiftieth year, which was called “Jubilee”. He granted remission of all sins, liberation from ancient faults, deliverance from the yoke of sin, which is heavier than all, and return to Paradise, the first place and the city of man, since He Himself was the propitiation for our sins, having been prefigured in ancient times

by the Day of Atonement, in which the fiftieth year was announced and proclaimed with the sound of the trumpet. He rightly said: “To call the acceptable year of the Lord”, and not: "To proclaim it." For the prophets had long proclaimed this year and announced it in advance with the prophetic trumpet. But Christ called this very year and made it present and actual. Now, that it was He Himself who brought us this fiftieth year, full of many goods, even the Jews, who did not know the mystery, said to Him: “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” For what prevented them from saying: "You are not yet forty," since Christ was young in age according to the flesh, though independent of time because He was God? For it was at the age of thirty that He came to baptism. And considering the antiquity of Abraham, they could have said: "Are You not five hundred—or a thousand, if need be—years old, You who have seen Abraham?" For this was especially the speech of mockers and scoffers. But they mentioned "fifty years" because of the mystery cited above. Thus, it is written that Caiaphas, when he was high priest that year and did not know what he was saying, said: “It is expedient that one man should die for the people”, not knowing that from this death life would spring forth for all the world. Divinely, it seems to me, the Holy Spirit arranged that the fiftieth psalm, which speaks of great mercy, the destruction of iniquity, and the cleansing of sin, should be noted, resembling the Jubilee year or rather resembling the incarnation of our Savior.

Since Basil and Gregory, the theologians who initiate us into the mysteries and are the authorized instructors of souls, interpret and explain this year for us, it is most fitting that their commemoration occurs at the beginning of the year, when they will still bless the entire course of the year. For they walked in the footsteps of Christ, God and High Priest for us, proclaiming good news to the poor, healing the brokenhearted, proclaiming liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, and thereby making every year the acceptable year of the Lord. Like Moses, they were instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and did not depart from the summit of Mount Sinai. But after they had thoroughly understood the ten words given from that place in the book of the tablets, written on the outside and inside, they elevated them to the perfection of the evangelical commandments, harmonized the strings found on both sides into one song and one doctrine, and tore apart like a spider’s web all the folly of vain and empty pagan dogmas. Thus, like Ignatius the God-bearing, they looked and fixed their eyes on the heavens,

remaining constantly in the higher beauties, dwelling with the incorporeal spirits, and being both outside the flesh and in the flesh. Take as proof of these dispositions the words of him who was truly God-bearing: “For I too, though I am bound and can understand heavenly things, the places of angels, the ranks of principalities, things visible and invisible, am not yet a disciple on that account. For many things are lacking in us so that we may not lack God.” Have you seen how the height of contemplation and the depth of humble thought are astonishing to the same degree? What pagan philosopher ever thought to say or conceive anything like this while striving for perfection and ascending to theology or, more modestly, possessing in other sciences an intelligence guarded on all sides? For them, was not all “logomachia”, or the examination of opinions, begun in pride and ended in arrogance and haughtiness, because for them, God was not the head of those who disputed when they refuted each other’s opinions, and each one wanted to be the head of some novelty? But as for us, since we have Christ as our head and master, and not a man, as He Himself says in the Gospels, let us prepare ourselves for the kingdom of heaven according to the word of the martyr Ignatius, “so that we may not utterly lack God”. To Him be praise unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 85 ON THE EPIPHANY. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Those who celebrate the feasts in a spiritual manner, always considering with the new eyes of their spirit the power of what is accomplished, celebrate the feasts not in an old way, but in a new way. For behold, I myself, after having celebrated this feast many times, presenting myself at this moment as a stranger, am struck with astonishment in my spirit, transported to the banks of the Jordan, and I believe I see Jesus himself standing in the middle of the river. And as for the meaning of this name (Jesus), I have the proper teaching of the reality which is more complete than all; for if Jesus is the salvation and the remedy of God, he himself derived absolutely no advantage from the waters. And when he was baptized, he received absolutely nothing more than he already had. For how could he, who is God by essence, and yet became man without change and without knowing sin? But it is for us that he gave the waters the full power to heal and to save, when he cried out through the very facts the word of the prophet Elisha: Thus says the Lord: I have purified these waters! For it was truly the prerogative of the Lord and God to say: I have purified these waters.

It is good that we quickly recall the story that clearly symbolized the mystery that was to take place. For after Elisha went down to Jericho—a city situated in a valley, low and placed below Jerusalem—the inhabitants of that place approached him, saying: Behold, the dwelling in this city is good, as you yourself see, my lord; but the waters are bad and cause barrenness. And Elisha said: Bring me a new dish and put salt in it. They took it; and Elisha went out to the spring of the waters, threw the salt in it, and said: Thus says the Lord: I have purified these waters, and henceforth there shall be no more death or barrenness because of them. Such was the first man, Adam, who, as from a very high and elevated city—I mean Paradise—which possesses the peace of God and is not troubled by passions—for it is Jerusalem—descended upon this low and very distant land from God, which on one hand is good—for all that comes from God is beautiful and very beautiful!—and which on the other hand was struck and afflicted by the death that sin brought forth and that the overflow of a humid life made swim and spread over all. But when Christ came, the new dish, he who from the Holy Spirit and the immaculate Virgin took a new body that the old sin could not touch, he who possessed in himself the salt—for in him were all the hidden treasures of wisdom,

as Paul says—which was also mixed with the waters when Christ descended into them, death on one hand ceased and stopped, and the waters on the other hand became not only healing waters but also waters that give birth to children. For those who were once drowned by the salty flood of sins and were children of death, when they are perfected by the life-giving waters of the Jordan, also become children of God through the second birth of the Spirit. That the body of man is an earthen vessel, Paul attested by writing to the Corinthians: We have this treasure in earthen vessels; and that the salt symbolizes the essential wisdom of God as well as all the spiritual and divine gifts that descend from it, the God-inspired Books also show, since on one hand they unite it with the legal sacrifices and clearly say: Every victim shall be salted with salt, and on the other hand they order to likewise put salt and incense on the showbread; they showed that even the things done under symbols were not common and empty of God, and that they represented figuratively and symbolized in advance the truth. For divinity is like salt—bright, white, light itself, driving away all the gangrene and rot of sin, and thus strengthening and enlightening those in whom it truly is. After the Apostles partook of this salt, they heard: You are the salt of the earth; just as those who possessed God dwelling in them also heard: I have said: You are gods and sons of the Most High, all of you. Likewise, incense, besides being bright and white, is also the mark of the divine and intellectual good odor; truly, when it was put with the salt on the showbread, it foreshadowed the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world and produces light in those who partake of it and by the divine odor delivers them from the stench of passions.

Among the things that through contemplation seem to be in relation with divinity or among the things that have been arranged for us through the unchangeable incarnation, a single object, even if considered symbolically, was not enough to show everything. Hence, in the ancient service, not only salt was needed, but also incense and many other symbolic things that could show what was to come, things whose proper meanings we have known, as much as possible, after their realization, and not only we all, but all those who, having been purified, obtained a small revelation by the grace from above. Our bodies are therefore objects and earthen vessels, as Paul says; but that of Christ was on one hand of the same essence as ours, and thus of clay—for it is from Adam, who was fashioned from mud, that he descended by generation, though he was divine, because he was truly

of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mother of God and without sin—and on the other hand, it was a new dish filled with waters; for, since he was animated by an intellectual soul, the living waters were hypostatically united to him—the Word of God, the source of life, he who said in the Gospels: He who drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; but the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life! It is very good that Elisha said: A dish, and not: "A jar." For the body of Christ is small—and one cannot say how very small—compared to the divinity united to it. This shows the greatness of the abasement, since truly he who is so great and whose greatness has no limit, according to the word of the prophet, was entirely in an unlimited way in this very small body and was limited by this small size and such a form. The dish of the waters therefore descended into the Jordan, or rather the waters themselves descended into the Jordan, where the source of life was, he who also says in the prophet Zechariah: If there is something good, it is from him; and if there is something beautiful, it is from him. That is why the Lord said: I have purified these waters, and henceforth death shall no longer exist or anyone die. For when the living waters were mixed with the Jordan, they broke the head of the dragon, as David says, or, as Isaiah says, of the fleeing serpent, who by a treacherous counsel caused death to Adam, and they destroyed all the power of the demons placed under him; for what else could happen, if not to flee, to him who received a mortal wound on the head? For because the waters of the Jordan extinguish every diabolical arrow and fire, David sang, saying: It is you who broke the heads of the dragons on the waters; then, taking up the word again, he says: Why say: The heads of the dragons? The head of the principal dragon who is the Calumniator; you crushed the skull which is the head of evil. It is because of this that there is no more death in the waters, because truly the source of the waters descended to them. For just as roots and shoots from the earth, once they spread and soak in the waters, transform them into their own color, so that they become red or scarlet, so too, because Jesus is the wisdom and strength of God and the Father, the light and the source of life, the justice, the holiness, and the salvation, the Son of him who gives life to the universe, once he was baptized in the streams of the Jordan, he put into them and gave them without restriction all these things that he possesses by essence and made them waters that enlighten, that give birth, that give life, that give wisdom, strength, holiness, salvation, and justice.

Let the sons of Nestorius, who divide the one our Lord and our God Jesus Christ by the duality of natures after the union, explain to us how he who put into the Jordan the richness of all these goods was completed after baptism, according to their expression? It is necessarily because attributing baptism to the man in particular and not to God the Word who became flesh applies and suits by all necessity to this impious division. If you please, let us also go to John, and we will find that he clearly rejects the same impiety. For when he saw with spiritual eyes that Jesus is full, that he lacks nothing, that he is complete in all as God by nature and that he needs nothing, John cried out this word: It is I who need to be baptized by you. "I," he said, "am to be counted among those who need, but not you, although you have become man like us." If Christ had also needed this perfection that comes from baptism, as the word of these impious ones would have it, the Baptist would have lied, saying: It is I who need to be baptized by you, and it is you who come to me. For Jesus would also be in need, if in truth by baptism he had to partake of a perfection. But he who does not lie pronounces on the words of the Baptist a concordant decision as well as on true words. For he did not say: Behold, I too need your baptism; but: Let it be so now, for it is fitting that we fulfill all justice. "I have come," he said, "to fulfill, and not to be fulfilled; for I need absolutely nothing, since I am full, as you also attested." It seems to me that he also calls "all justice" the perfection of our baptism that he was to establish in the waters by the fact of his own descent. For that baptism is the perfect justice that purifies, so to speak, from every trace of the stain caused by sins, Paul attests when he expresses himself about the baptized in these terms: Justified freely by his grace through the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. Since then your worship of man, which is more impious than all, O such, has been repudiated by the Jordan when it received the living waters, has been cast out by John when he cried out this word: It is I who need to be baptized by you, and has been rejected also by Jesus when he made the response: Let it be so now, and showed that he himself fulfills and is not fulfilled, henceforth let us also set out towards the testimony of the Father.

But first, the opening of the heavens draws me to it and a great admiration for an infinite charity fills me. For he who had closed Paradise to Adam and placed the cherub and the flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life, he, once he had cleansed and washed Adam and shown him new in himself, or rather showed himself Adam, opens at this moment the heavens in place of Paradise, clearly

showing that baptism is for us the opening of the heavens and the ready path towards the regions above, it is of this path that Paul said: He inaugurated for us a new path. For if the gates of the heavens had not seen the true king and the Son of God and Father by nature, they would not have opened; for it is for kings that the royal dwellings open. And so, now that Jesus has opened the heavens, he also gave to his own servants to see similar things. That is why Stephen, the first of the martyrs, said: Behold, I see the heavens opened. It seems to me that the opening of the heavens is both something sensible, as if the heavens were cut, as Mark said, and a perfect revelation of the Trinity and a knowledge suited to celestial beings, since on one side the voice came as from the part of the Father and showed us the proper hypostasis of the Father, and since on the other side it was addressed to the Son and said: You are my beloved Son, and proclaimed at the same time the truth and the equality of essence of the divinity and also the indivisibility of the union with the flesh. For it is to him who is seen, to him who was the incarnate Word of God, who is one and the same and not another outside of him who is hidden, as it seems to Nestorius, that he said significantly this word: You, and this word: My Son, this word: You are, and not this word: You have become. For this word: You are, belongs to nature, while this word: "You have become," belongs to adoption and grace, so that in truth according to the testimony of the Father also the reasonings of these impious ones have fallen outside the truth. The Holy Spirit on one hand descended in the form of a dove and on the other hand rested on him for us, so that, coming as on the firstfruits of our race, he might also pass on those who are of the same race, when they are perfected by divine baptism. Now what was said by John: He remained on him, clearly shows that the Spirit belonged to him properly and was not to another. For as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, so also the Holy Spirit is in the Father and in the Son because of the identity of essence.

Because it is for us that Christ was baptized, when he filled our baptism with light, life, and holiness, and made himself the path of the coming of the Spirit to us, it is therefore for us also that he was led into the wilderness by the Spirit; and he shows that those who must believe in him and be baptized, once they are anointed by this strong and very valiant anointing of the Spirit and are anointed as athletes by the oil of grace, must be led to the high and very tested stadium of temptations; on one hand they must fight with the cruel enemy who was to envy them because of the

adoption and because of the kinship with God; The wicked will see him and be angry, gnash his teeth, and melt away, says David; and on the other hand he was to be defeated, because his power was broken in advance by the preliminary combat that Christ fought for us with him. For that it was to help us that he endured the temptation, Paul made it clearly known when he says: For because he himself suffered in his temptation, he can help those who are tempted. "It is as a powerful help," he says, "that he predisposed, like an excellent doctor, his own temptation for the benefit of those who must be tempted; just as when he endured the cross, it is as a powerful weapon that he gave it to us against the enemy." Why then would we ourselves be ashamed of these waters that purify? Let us not fall into the mud of shameful desires. Let us tremble at the opening of the heavens and not forbid it to ourselves, thinking of nothing that belongs to the heavens, but of all that belongs to the earth. Let us not turn our backs on the Calumniator and not show that Christ was tempted for us in vain. But in all things let us honor him who voluntarily endured all for us. To him be glory for the ages! Amen!

## HOMILY 86 ON SAINT ANTHONY, THE FIRST INITIATOR OF THE SOLITARY AND MONASTIC LIFE IN EGYPT AND ITS LEADER.

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The great Athanasius, the apostolic man who had “Christ speaking within him”, wrote the life of the divine Anthony in a manner both instructive and historical. It is a story that presents in itself the teaching, the first rule, and the image of philosophy. To whom, indeed, did it belong, if not to Athanasius, the teacher of immortality in the kingdom of heaven, to depict for us the model of virtues, so that it might truly and genuinely be pure and radiant in the artless and unadorned form of the evangelical word and in the pure and truthful account of thoughts, as in a mirror? For it is fitting that the truth of facts be preached through true words, devoid of grandiloquent ornaments, yet capable of persuading and naturally and effortlessly fixing in the souls of the listeners what is beneficial, so that the intellect may focus solely on the nature and imitation of what is recounted, as if it possessed its entirety and details.

As for me, I have come forward in public only for this: to glorify the Word of God who, through His divine and charitable incarnation, elevated our earthly nature, buried under shameful and most despicable passions, to the heights of heaven. He confirmed the words found in the sacred Gospels—words once disbelieved—through those who lived purely and practiced the ascetic life and taught them. How necessary is it to cite them? It was said to the Apostles and through them to those who followed the word of truth: “Behold, I send you out as sheep among wolves”; and also: “You will be brought before governors and kings for my sake”. But who, before the event, did not decree that these words could not be fulfilled, or on the contrary, that they were unbelievable, and truly said in hesitation and disbelief: “Would we then fall like sheep among wolves? And what would happen to us if not to be devoured and perish? For the sheep is ready prey for the wolf, food offered willingly to its cruel teeth. Tell me, would parents forget the love they have for their children and arm themselves against those dear to them? And the children, would they not take pity, if not on anything else, at least on the white hair of those who gave them birth? Would no one fear death, the most terrible of all things? Would someone despise their body as an inanimate sack, submitting it insensibly to wounds and cuts? Would someone not turn toward that sweet and most pleasing

light?" But the numerous and valiant crowd of martyrs, on the contrary, overturned all this and made what was once unbelievable credible, transforming many wolves into peaceful sheep, joyfully allowing themselves to be led to martyrdom like a summer torrent. They set divine and invincible love for the Creator of nature and the true Father against natural love, caring little for the flesh and temporary light, having fixed the eyes of their spirit once and for all on the intellectual light and the boundless splendor of the promised resurrection, of which we have as guarantee the words of Him who said: "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

But He who said these words and sought ears to hear them, because virtue was rare and scarce, later opened the ears of understanding of those who believed in Him so widely that many eagerly rushed to the combat for piety, to death as to life, and said with Paul the words previously spoken by David: "For your sake we are killed all day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." And when these had overcome torments of every kind and sort, all the magic of demons also ceased suddenly, along with the celebration of feasts, madness, frenzy, the shedding of impure blood, shameful omens from entrails and livers, senseless ceremonies, atheistic and unmentionable mysteries that breathe death and the loss of rational souls—so much so that the demons fled and, like dogs, abandoned even against their will the stench of sacrifices. The places of divination, which before the coming of the Word of God in the flesh were endowed with speech and uttered nonsense in all their babbling and had never been silent, likewise fell silent. Where, indeed, is the "Pelasgian" or bronze cauldron that was at Dodona, foolish and talkative? Or where is the tripod of Apollo at Delphi, pregnant with perverse oracles and perverting the intelligence of those who obeyed it, blinding them to the choice of what was fitting? Where are those other places of divination full of all deceit, cunning tricks, and incantations that captivated listeners with the modulation of responses, such as the Chaldean and most famous words spread by pagan pride and false prestige as grave matters, which deceitfully hindered or disturbed evil spirits and demons with tight and cunning bonds filled with all kinds of spells and spread terror and madness among those who used them?

All these places fell into complete silence and were closed with threats, remaining ineffective and inoperative after they heard, like the sea of the Gospels agitated by waves and swollen and inflated by the winds, this word: “Be silent, be still.” And the demons, who once loved to dwell in alleys, squares, and markets where buying and selling took place, who vented their rage in the midst of cities with great authority and were honored with sacrifices, incense, temples, and offerings—after arming many princes and governors against religion, acting among the children of rebellion, as it is written, sharpening their fury to ferocity like wild beasts and seeking their happiness in laws, political institutions, and torments of all kinds for their advantage, to make error dominate—were finally defeated by the patience of the martyrs and fled into deserted and uninhabitable places like beaten men and very wicked and evil servants, once they had risen above God their master and finally sought to attribute to themselves His glory. Since this was so and the words of the Gospel grew daily through the facts themselves, Anthony, who is truly great, came into this world. Guided from his youth by the Spirit of God, he did not even allow himself to go to school or partake in the study of writing, partly because he fled the conversation and tranquil life of children, which is generally unruly, and because he pursued from then on solitary manners and customs, and partly by a disposition of God Himself, because he was truly to ascend through the practice of virtues to the man formed from the beginning, who possessed the operations of the intellect in their fullness and the senses of the body without any impairment, who dwelled in the meadows of Paradise, who had no need, in terms of conscience, for a written law, but who, without writing or instruction, moved toward the divine commandment by the natural movement of the soul.

Therefore, because Anthony was animated by such dispositions, even after the death of his father and mother, he went only to the church. When he heard the reading of the sacred Books, it was as if he heard not men reading, but God legislating; it was He whom he represented, and he believed he was bound to fulfill His laws, saying: “If they are not fulfilled by men, then they have been written in vain; for if we must not act, neither must we hear.” So when he heard Paul say: “I discipline my body and bring it into subjection”; and: “In labor and toil, in sleepless nights often, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness”, he exercised himself through the labors of the flesh to fast all day and eat only when the evening star rose, to apply himself not to take food, not to wash, to sleep on the ground, and

to keep vigil in prayers, hymns, and psalms. To this was added poverty, for he heard: “Sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.”

After carefully listening to all these words, he wanted to learn by experience the power of these words of the Apostle who says: “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness.” He understood and discerned for himself that the whole work of perfection has as adversaries the demons who penetrate in tight ranks with the passions of the flesh, who deceitfully set traps through the bonds of matter and the necessities of the world, and who weaken the virile energy of the soul. But they attack us using intermediaries, not by making themselves visible, so to speak, and being stripped of their coverings. But what astonished and amazed the Calumniator above all and suffocated the demons was that Anthony was enriched with the grace of discerning spirits and that by a lively thought he uncovered without stupor or disturbance their most tangled and subtle tricks. He sensed them from afar and said with Paul: “For we are not ignorant of his devices.” Therefore, since they could in no way entangle him and make him kneel in the presence of this experience, and since they were harshly pained and stung by it, they inflicted such cruel wounds on his body that he was left half-dead, and it was almost thought he was dead. Without his pain being comparable to the torments invented by men, would anyone have believed even then that demons are capable of causing such wounds, even corporeally?

But by a disposition of God’s providence, who had also allowed the athlete to be tested to this point and to triumph, the one who brought him bread at a determined and regular time came to him. Finding the door open—for this too was the work of providence—he saw how the great Anthony lay in all his greatness; to speak politically, this courageous and strong wrestler, who had forgotten his body rather than the battle with the demons and who had chosen to die in torments rather than flee the arena. After taking him as if dead, he carried him to the village church; and while many people, especially those related to him by kinship, stood by him as by an inanimate body, weeping and mourning, night fell. While all slept, Anthony, who by chance had regained a little consciousness around midnight and had risen, prayed to the one who served him for the bread he needed to take him secretly in

the same way and carry him to the deserted and terrifying tomb and leave him there. When this was done—for this servant too was at his disposal and agreed with him on this, because he was not primarily the servant of his body but the auxiliary of his struggles in the assigned life—after the door was closed as usual, Anthony lay on the ground, singing psalms against the demons and praying—for he could not yet stand—and crying out loudly: “Here I am, I have returned to you, I, Anthony, without having departed in soul. For”, he said, “although in your torments you have wounded my whole body, I have not received a single wound of flight on my back like a fugitive; but all are visible, and I bear them as if written on my chest, crying out clearly and showing in place of writing that nothing will separate me from the love of Christ.” For once I have struggled with you, I have not turned back to look behind me.

Because the demons heard these words in their cruelty and hatred of men, they then raised against him the imagination of wild beasts mentioned above. Far from being frightened, Anthony amused himself joyfully, mocking and laughing at the great number of those who had attacked him, which he considered a mark of weakness and an imagination frightened by shadows, all while suffering and being cruelly tormented by the pain of these wounds and torments and by the attacks and combats so great and varied. But as if the roof had split, a ray of ineffable light entered through it and shone upon him, suddenly rendering the demons invisible and immediately producing in him an unspeakable joy and powerful comfort. After he asked: “Why did you not help me from the beginning?” he heard a voice say: “I did not depart or withdraw from you; but I waited to see the proof of your struggles.” Once thus comforted and restored to health, the love of greater combats entered him; he aspired to the inner desert, very empty and devoid of tranquility, and moved toward it. It was not eagerness or boldness that intervened, but the fact that this way of life had been proven to be the best. When he hastened with such energy toward the object of his love, the one who said to our Savior: “All these things I will give you if you fall down and worship me”, showed him the imagination of a silver dish thrown to the ground. Passing it in his course, he left it behind, crying out by this very act the words of our Lord: “Get behind me, Satan.” For, to speak briefly, it was before seeing with his eyes that he saw with the keen eye of discernment and distinctly recognized the illusion of this vision. And like the sun falling on a cloud, the thought of the just man similarly dissipated the

imagination, and the dish became invisible. But another time, as much gold appeared in the desert—whether in reality or in appearance, whether God tested him or the demons deceived and seduced him—this gold did not deceive his sight, far from deceiving his mind. But as if it were a burning fire, he flew with swift wings and passed over it; for by this very act he cried out to our Savior Christ: "The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces."

These were the minor combats he waged on his way to the desert. Once he found a place that suited him and was full of many venomous snakes, he ended his journey. And after establishing his philosophical dwelling there, he first made the snakes invisible by chasing them with the sole of his foot as if striking them, and then he remained hidden alone inside. After dwelling a long time in this place, delighting in contemplation, and achieving a great victory in the combat against evil spirits, men were again drawn to him by the one who said to the Apostles: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." For he who lights the torch of virtues must illuminate others and not shine only for himself. Therefore, many ran after the light of his precepts; while he remained hidden, he illuminated even those far away. Merely approaching the door of his hut, they were delivered from diseases of every kind, and, not to enumerate these things one by one, they were like those whom the Apostles restored to health, as the story recounts. When they stayed and remained with him, he begged them not to disturb him, refusing absolutely to let anyone enter his cell. And the visitors heard night and day, as if there were a split in this great crowd of adversaries, a great tumult, noises, blows, groans, and other terrors of this kind, so that they were filled with fear and trembled, fearing that the illustrious and courageous athlete might suffer some eternal and incurable pain while fighting alone against all these enemies. Fixing their eyes on the disjointed door assemblies due to the length of time or other holes, they looked and observed to see those they believed to be inside; but they saw absolutely no one except Anthony alone fighting against the invisible enemies, asking them not to concern themselves with him, to return peacefully to their homes, and only to pray to the Lord for him. The demons, indeed, also cried out like the "legion" mentioned in the Gospels: "What have we to do with you, Anthony? Leave and abandon the desert, cease to dwell here; you cannot endure our tricks, you will not be able to until the end." But by his patience, he showed them according to his custom that they were liars and weak.

Then, as many came to the desert as to a city, ceaselessly, receiving one another in a determined order, some departing and others arriving, and as already a great number of monks rushed with similar zeal, drawn by this good example and coming to him as to the teacher, the inhabitant of an uninhabited land and the leader of a terrifying life that defied all boldness, Anthony was forced to come out and obey the law of the Apostle which commands: “Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s good.” Thus he appeared like an angel coming from heaven, presenting by his exterior appearance the image of the inner man, possessing senses free from disturbance and filled with calm, behaving even in bodily movement in a somewhat immaterial manner and seeming to be outside the flesh, showing through his body as through a holy temple that the spirit presiding in him as a leader had been entirely divinized by contemplation and the company of God, so that, finding himself among many monks, he made himself recognized by his mere appearance, without anyone pointing him out to those who did not know him.

Often, indeed, he also visited those who had chosen and embraced the philosophical and eremitical life. When he gathered them and united them in a single bond and opened his mouth to treat practical and theoretical matters, he gave instructive and healing commandments and prescriptions such as a general gives, teaching and learning what was appropriate to each one’s strength: “Let all, following the example of the Apostle, equally engage in manual labor and not eat without working; but like Paul, let them say with magnanimity: In labor and toil we must thus help the weak and truly remember the words of our Lord Jesus, for He Himself said: It is more blessed to give than to receive; and: These hands have served my needs and those of the people with me.” Let them at the same time meditate on the divine Books and nourish their spirit by contemplation; let them cast far from them unclean and ancient thoughts, let them wash at every hour in the waters of renewal; let them by certain thoughts overthrow and destroy the softness and dissolution of concupiscence, and by others confront the demons that produce fear; let them acquire confidence against them and remember that Paul said: “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power.”

He added: “One must also distinctly know by certain signs the arrival of demons and angels; for that these seducers change and appear differently as angels of light

is something the Apostle cannot be ignorant of, either by those who have experienced it." And he said: "We must neither ask for revelation, nor prophecy, nor manifestation of signs, and if we obtain these favors, we must not conceive great esteem or pride. These things belong to Him who gave them and not to ourselves; and they are arranged for the utility of others and not to feed our pride: for it is pride to adorn and boast of what is beyond our strength as if it were our own. It belongs to those who apply themselves to monastic life to show themselves patient in labors, and this with the help of God, to banish the imaginative thoughts that defile the spirit, and not to forget that the prophet Ezekiel says of Jerusalem: She has defiled herself in all her thoughts; and that Paul writes not only: Glorify God in your body; but also: Thoughts accuse or excuse one another on the day when God judges the secrets of men; and: We have the mind of Christ." When Anthony taught these principles with finesse and clarity, because he was instructed by experience itself, he immediately learned and also taught the ease of exercising virtues, showing the methods and wise procedures, because he was also instructed by God, as the Apostle says. Therefore, as he still wished to ascend flying to the desert of the Egyptians of Thebes, seeking the last dwelling, according to the word of Jeremiah, and running after a place completely unknown to men, the sole voice of God's providence restrained him.

Then also a great crowd of pagans flocked to see Anthony as an extraordinary spectacle, saying: "Let us run to see the man of God"; and indeed they regarded this sight as a contemplation favorable to religion, seeing that his face, gait, and all his limbs were filled with profound peace, as if there were in them some intellectual and well-ordered movement, so that by this they believed they had proof that the spirit as charioteer was seated very wisely on the members and that God dwelt anew in him. And seeing again that the demons were maltreated and chased by him and learning by their very cries that they were shamefully chased, as wicked servants are maltreated and beaten, even by the Christians who had honored them with terrible sacrifices and libations, they mocked their deception, and of their own will they returned to religion and converted, not one or two, but entire families and households. And seeing that Anthony was crushed and jostled by the great crowd gathered around him, without being troubled or paying attention to this unusual situation, they marveled to hear him say that the men around him were no more numerous than the demons who fought with him on the mountain. I

omit how, when he dwelt on this mountain, even pagan philosophers desired to see him, undeterred by the length of the journey. When he conversed with them about natural thoughts and the divine habitation of the Holy Spirit, and not about the enigmas of geometry or the modes of demonstration of Aristotle's dialectic, he reduced them to such silence that they praised the one who read Christ speaking in him. Therefore, I have not cited in this homily the discourses he made to them, because I do not wish to tarnish by my words their own natural beauty. For Athanasius alone, enriched with the same Spirit, the most abundant of teachers and the most patient of those who have fought for religion, has committed them to memory, so that they are cited correctly and faithfully. For this reason, I refer you to his book filled with many good things.

As for me, by what I have said, I have only recalled what is the jealousy of demons toward the human race and what is their tactics, and shown that men who have conducted themselves according to the Gospel have proven by experience how the power of the cross has rendered the demons weak, to whom the pagans offered incense and libations as to God. For the Calumniator, who in a very short time deceived Adam by mere taste and made him a stranger to Paradise, could not make Anthony, who had become a monk from childhood and lived one hundred and five years, descend from the mountain of philosophy, after having exhausted all his cunning means and disposed himself to combat against him with all his arms. And Paradise on the one hand lost by this deception the only citizen who dwelt there, and the desert on the other received by Anthony's patience a great number of citizens who inhabited it and was delivered from the Calumniator and the demons who dwelt there. Who does not know that Egyptian idolatry once dominated so much that it demanded that even among reptiles, those much viler and more despicable than all, be adored? And that religion has dominated there since Christ and still dominates in truth by the orthodoxy of dogmas and the confession of the healthy faith, and this among men who by monastic life accomplish the Gospel in reality and show the Apostles' prescriptions in the abundant grace of the Spirit? We too, who know that all Christians have to sustain a combat against the Calumniator and the demons, must therefore live chastely and observe the commandments correctly, as much as possible, so that when we are delivered from the body and depart from this world, we may have the angels to march before us and fight in our place against the wicked phalanx of aerial and invisible enemies and conduct us to

the regions of light until the day of resurrection, where, after having recovered our body, we will rise for judgment and, after being found innocent by the just sentence of the infallible judge, obtain the kingdom of heaven and the eternal and diverse dwellings found there, each according to his preparation and action. May we all obtain this by the grace and charity of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ! To Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 87 ON LENT, WHICH IS THE FOURTH ON THIS SUBJECT.

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The fast presents itself before us now as a glorious and very royal door, and through it, one who enters is permitted to see the King of Glory, our Lord and God Jesus Christ, as much as it is possible for men to see Him; and this is most just. For it is said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Now, what can purify like fasting, which on one hand cools and numbs the burning desires of the flesh and on the other cleanses the inner man of all that drags him downward, preparing him to comprehend heavenly things? Thus, we draw near to God, measure and appreciate the Creator through His works, and are nourished by thoughts that sustain our life and breath, imagining nothing but God alone. We cry out with the Psalmist: "My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me." For when one clings to purity, he is guided by God's hand, no longer dragged down by earthly things.

Let us run, therefore, toward this door, and by every means and artifice of reflection, let us make it accessible—not only the door but also a broad space—by tolerating nothing that might obstruct it. Rather, let us sweep away and cast far off all impurities. How absurd it would be if, when a king enters a city, the streets, squares, and gates are cleaned, and people of all ages and sexes rush splendidly dressed to greet him, lest they meet him improperly or miss seeing him—even though his passing brings no real benefit, only a fleeting joy like a dream. Yet we, who await not an earthly king but the King of Heaven, approach the royal door of fasting with disdain, turning instead to gluttony and slave-like appetites, failing to cut away what hinders our ascent. We forget that we are to enjoy not merely the sight but the very company, familiarity, and intimacy of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whose glory and power are eternal. He does not sit on white mules or a golden chariot adorned with jewels, nor is He clothed in purple or scarlet shoes, nor crowned with gold and bright colors, nor surrounded by armed men. Instead, He is struck on the cheek by the high priest's servant, securing our freedom by the blow He willingly received, having banished the slavery to which we were sold by sin. For when He became flesh—that is, man—without change, wholly except for sin, He did not alter His nature as the Word, the Son, and the invisible image of the

Father. He remained steadfast in His being, taking the form of a servant, as it is written, and thus entered into the sufferings of our slavery, though without sin. Therefore, He also received spitting and scourging, removing the shame Adam felt when, deceived by the serpent, he found himself naked and hid in Paradise, saying to God, "I heard Your voice and was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." But Christ Himself cried out through Isaiah, denying these words and contradicting them, fulfilling them in His incarnation: "I gave My back to the strikers and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. The Lord is My helper; therefore, I am not ashamed. I have set My face like a flint, for I know I shall not be ashamed, for He who justifies Me is near." For it was fitting that He who knew no sin should endure these things to nullify their power. When struck, spat upon, and scourged, He felt no shame, for there was no cause for shame in Him. He set His face like a flint, showing His impassibility: the sufferings and shames that assailed Him were shattered and scattered, leaving Him untouched. As one who strikes a rock is himself struck, so those who attacked Christ were broken by His steadfastness. The words "I gave My back" and "I did not hide My face" show His voluntary submission to humiliation. "The Lord is My helper" and "He who justifies Me is near" are words suited to His incarnate economy. For though He was God by nature, He did not disdain to speak as a man when He became flesh for us. Had He not done so, the entire economy of salvation would have been undone. If He acted by necessity, His words would betray weakness. But since He willingly took the form of a servant, He also willingly used human speech for our sake. For we are the ones truly helped and justified in Him. Where would Christ, the power of God, need help? Or how could He, of whom Isaiah wrote, "Before the child knows good or evil, He refuses evil to choose good," require justification? To be firmly rooted in good, untouched by evil, is the mark of Him who is just by nature—God Himself. Men choose good or evil by will, but Christ, as God, is inherently just. Paul makes this clear: "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Through the door of fasting, you will see Christ clothed in a scarlet robe, crowned with thorns, and given a reed as a scepter—things that seem contemptible at first but contain the remedy for our ills and the divine love worthy of our Creator. For because we were under the rule of sin, red as blood, and the death it brought,

Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, clothed Himself in our sin, fulfilling Isaiah's words: "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." The crown of thorns on His sinless head symbolizes sin, as the Psalmist says: "I was bowed down with sorrow when the thorn pierced me; I confessed my sin and did not hide my iniquity." In the Law, the sinner laid hands on the sacrificial victim, signifying the transfer of sin. Christ, the Lamb who takes away the world's sin, bore our sins as a sacrificial victim, purifying us all. As Paul says, "He was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Peter adds, "He bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we, dead to sin, might live for righteousness." The reed scepter also holds mystery. Though we were made rational in God's image and given self-mastery, we bowed to shameful passions, losing our royal likeness. Christ took the fragile reed—symbol of our weakened kingship—and by His mighty hand made it strong again. By partaking of our flesh and soul, removing sin, He purified and strengthened us, restoring the royal image to its original power. Indeed, He made it stronger, becoming the firstfruits of our race, giving His own qualities to those buried with Him in baptism and clothed in Him. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Next, you will see the taste of gall and vinegar contrasted with Adam's intemperance, the hands nailed to the wood opposing his reckless hand that touched the forbidden fruit, and Jesus lifted on the cross, who said, "When I am lifted up, I will draw all men to Myself." At once, the sun darkened, the earth quaked, rocks split, and darkness covered all, for creation could not bear to see its Creator crucified and suffering—yet only in the flesh, for He is impassible. The tombs opened, releasing many dead, for He who descended would also ascend, breaking the bonds of Hades, sowing the seed of our resurrection, and paving the way. After three days in the tomb, He rose, ascended to heaven, and sat on the throne of glory He had never left, even in incarnation, for as God He fills all things.

Do you see where the door of fasting leads and to what heights it lifts you? Must we not purify this fast, removing every stumbling block, lest we fall and miss this triumphant entry? More than purification, the prophet commands us to sanctify the fast: "Sanctify a fast," cries Joel. As God commanded just judgment, so He commands us to sanctify the fast—to approach it holy, that it may be truly a fast. This means abstaining not only from food but from all impurity and lust, fasting from evil and tasting no wickedness. If during the fast someone invites you to

horse races or similar spectacles, say, "Do you not know we are commanded to sanctify the fast? Can one enter the holy temple while gazing at Satan's shameful displays?" Fear God, and save your brother as well as yourself. If you grow weary as the day lengthens, do not turn to dice or idle pastimes. Say instead, "I am commanded to sanctify the fast; dice bring not sanctification but estrangement from God." For dice breed bitterness, rage, blasphemy, and every evil Paul lists, grieving the Holy Spirit. Worse, they lead to wounds, murder, loss, sorcery, and pagan incantations—the doctrines of demons. To sanctify the fast, flee boredom by hastening to church, listening to psalms, and delighting in tears. Join in singing with David, "O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Your praise." Pray with the faithful, attend the mysteries, and the day will seem short, consecrated to God. These practices bring sweetness, humility, and hatred for pride. Beware of feigned kindness and flattering words, for insincere love is worse than open enmity—more cruel than wild beasts. Jeremiah says, "Their tongue is a piercing arrow; they speak peace to their neighbor but harbor malice." And, "Lord, You are near in their mouth but far from their heart." A wise man adds, "All their love vanishes." Fasting is pure and holy, admitting no evil. It is crowned by love, the chief of virtues. Without love, fasting is empty. Paul says, "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor and deliver my body to be burned, without love, I gain nothing." Practice humility and gentleness toward all, yet without compromising God's commands. The prophet says, "Let the meek be warlike," and God commanded Israel, "Be enemies to the Midianites, for they deceived you." Flee fornication, as Paul warns, not only in youth but in marriage, lest impure habits take root and persist into pitiable old age. Let virgins call fasting their sister, as Proverbs says, for purity and fasting are companions. Let wives regard fasting as a faithful guardian of chastity and a bond of trust with their husbands. Avoid slander and idle curiosity. Freed from the tumult of the marketplace, remain at home as in a philosophical sanctuary, devoted to domestic tasks, psalms, and spiritual songs. Shut your doors to gossiping women, lest their foolish talk defile you. Slander, like adultery, shuts the kingdom of heaven. Sanctify the fast thus, and you will bring mercy to the poor and spur your households to good works. If debtors cannot pay, press them charitably, withholding interest. Why should your belly fast while greed does not? This gives fasting its luster and draws down heavenly blessings, enriching you with God's wealth, extending to your children and the promise of eternal goods. "The blessing is on the head of the giver," and "The righteous man

leaves an inheritance to his children’s children." Thus, the fast is perfectly sanctified, God’s healing proclaimed, and Christ glorified even by unbelievers. To Him be praise with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

**HOMILY 88 ON THE USUAL PREPARATION FOR ENTERING THE BAPTISTRY.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

At this moment, it seems to me, the source of the Jordan is preparing for the adorable day of the resurrection, and because of this, it closes and bars the entrance to the (baptistry), following the example of a mother. Truly, indeed, she is a spiritual mother, who will send you, (you) who are her true children, to the vineyard of fasting, imitating the master of the vineyard and saying: "Go and work," and not agreeing with you on a denarius (διγάτου) per day or setting: “I will give you what is fitting.” For you are not hired workers, but you have already become children of light; and, when it comes to (her) children, a mother does not agree on a wage, but for the little ones of her womb, she gathers, sets aside, and carefully guards all the wealth of her goods and gives them everything abundantly and generously. Remember, therefore, that it is by your mother that you have been sent to work in the vineyard, and go to work with complete joy and all your strength. For this is the mark of children; and it is the mark of hired workers to show themselves neglectful, to mock the one who hired them by pretending (σχῆμα) to work, to toil under compulsion and necessity (ἀνάγια) in hope of a wage, and to wish for the day to end. But benevolent children (ὑνοος), who still preserve the nobility (ὑγγένας) of their mother in purity and without alteration, know clearly that, although they do everything to please their mother, they cannot give her anything equal to her gestation or (her) childbirth or (her) pains; and the pleasure given to a mother is like a debt, rather the most just of all debts, and not a favor. And you yourselves, ask yourselves who (you have become) instead of who (you were). (The day) when the spiritual mother received you, the same day she conceived, gave birth, and brought you into the world.

But, if you please, “let us learn from the Apostle the virtue of these children”: "see the divine ways and the sudden change that (occurs) in those who at the same time were conceived, developed in the womb, and were brought into the world. What does he say then? We too, indeed, were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, enslaved to all kinds of desires and pleasures, living in wickedness and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and love (φιλανθρωπία) of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy, through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the

Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life." Do you understand: "The washing of rebirth"? Do you understand: "The renewal of the Spirit"? You have their meaning in the very words. Indeed, after washing and cleaning, the mother gave birth; she did not only wash but also gave birth. For the purpose of the washing is to cleanse the filth of wickedness, and (that) of birth is to imprint, mark, and set the characters (εικων) of grace as natural properties in those who have come into the world. This is why, to also show this, we find that those who from the very beginning were made perfect by the Apostles through divine baptism, at the very moment they came out of the water, spoke in tongues and prophesied, and they displayed the marks of their maternal birth and shone everywhere. Then, indeed, it was still the time of signs, so that the preaching of the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον) might spread, grow, and encompass all nations that, inclined toward ancestral idolatry, were difficult to save and remained unshaken, to speak more truly; but it is from such stones that signs and wonders have wonderfully raised children for Abraham. For the signs and gifts from the Holy Spirit occur for a need and not for a (mere) display, because even now the same grace remains whole, without diminution or any change; and, if the occasion demanded it, those who were baptized would necessarily still perform signs and miracles, once they are clothed with Christ and possess his Spirit who does and speaks all things; as the Preacher says, indeed, all things have their time; for it is neither Paul nor Apollos who baptizes, but God himself.

Since, by this spiritual birth given to you by the mystical source of the Jordan, you have become new instead of old, believers instead of unbelievers, children and servants of God instead of slaves to sin, true instead of erroneous, worshipers of the Creator instead of worshipers of creatures, heirs of the heavenly Father and co-heirs with Christ instead of strangers, with what fitting payments will you be able to repay a mother who has such beautiful children—and it is good to add—who also has many children? For she has both qualities at once. A fitting payment, therefore, cannot be found. Now she rejoices greatly that you run to the vineyard of fasting not with sadness or necessity (ἀνάγια), but with a joyful and smiling face (πρόσωπον) and a serene spirit; for God loves joy not only in the one who gives, but also in the servant or worker. I pass over the fact that the one who works for his mother, or who, it seems, toils for her, works above all for himself, first because he

expects to receive the maternal inheritance, and second because he immediately gathers her blessing in particular; listen, indeed, to the divine word that says: “The blessing of a mother strengthens the houses of children.” When, therefore, you have been in the vineyard of fasting—for I would not stray from this word (of fasting) by calling it a vineyard above—so that you do not forget the labor—on the one hand, by breaking up earthly worries with the hoe (δικελλα) of patience, separate them from the roots of the vine, appropriating only what can bear fruit and profit, but removing and casting far from you all that cannot bear fruit and produces thorns or brambles; on the other hand, by sharpening well your sickle, I mean the judgment of the spirit, wisely cut away among all the branches those that are capable of burning and fueling the fire of hell with which we have been threatened—the feelings of passions and obscene and shameful thoughts—and leave only those that can bear fruit, and this is the ardent zeal for virtues.

Then, we must also water the vineyard abundantly with the water of love for the poor (φιλοπτωχία). Now the vineyard is Christ, who appropriates the branches of virtues and says: “I am the vine, and you are the branches”; this is why, when he is given abundantly to drink, he also says to those who give him to drink: “I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink.” Beside the love of labor (φιλοπονία), place equally the vigilant duty of psalmody, which keeps watch during the night, lest the Slanderer, the wicked thief, and the jealous demon try by insidious and hidden means to plunder the vineyard. Take care—(let us take care) we too who watch and keep guard with you—not to deceive yourselves regarding the example of those who stood idle in the marketplace at the third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours and then went to the vineyard, and to wait until two, three, or even several weeks have passed in fasting and thus set yourselves to labor or patience; for the one who does this with deceit and artifice does not deceive the lawgiver (νομοθέτης), and he is still like those who say: “Let us do evil, that good may come”; the condemnation of such people is just, as Paul says. Behold, indeed, I tell you in advance, consider all the days of fasting as a single hour, (namely) the eleventh, act with joy, and do not slacken in useful labors. For if it is thirsty and sweating from the labors of the earth that you come to the resurrection, you will have the joy of seeing that the mother, the source of the Jordan, will make waters gush forth invisibly mixed with the Spirit. Turning to her and greeting her, you will be refreshed and will rest from your toils, worthy of the blessings that will flow from it, you will also be

intoxicated by the cup of blood that produces an intoxication stronger and mightier than all, as David sings; the cup, indeed, is strong; for the intoxication produced by unmixed wine is of languor and softness, while that produced by a spiritual drink is of power and strength against the Slanderer and the demons and against dishonorable passions. May we too be delivered from them by the grace and love (φιλανθρωπία) of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be praise with the Father (and) with the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages! Amen!

**HOMILY 89 ON THE PARABLE (REPORTED) IN THE HOLY GOSPEL (Εὐαγγέλιον) OF LUKE, WHOSE PURPOSE IS THIS: A MAN WAS GOING DOWN FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO AND FELL AMONG THIEVES. AND (THERE IS A REPROACH) ADDRESSED TO THOSE WHO, AS IS CUSTOMARY AMONG THE YOUNG, DO NOT RETAIN PIECES OF CLOTH TO CARE FOR THOSE TORMENTED BY THE ULCERS OF LEPROSY OR SOME OTHER AFFLICTION.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I have suffered greatly in my soul, I have been deeply wounded, I have been plunged into sorrow, having seen you, on the Sunday preceding this one, listening with indifference to the holy and divine reading of the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον) and passing over the power of what is written (which you heard) purely and simply with the ears, without applying your heart at the same time to the very words. But, so as not to make my speech painful by insisting from the beginning on reproaches, I will first remind you of what has been read, and, I will explain it to you as much as I can, with measure; then, I will also arrive at what my accusation (κατηγορία) reproaches you with, leading you by persuasion to what is perfect as brothers, but not throwing myself or rushing upon you as upon guilty ones in the manner of a judge.

Let us see, then, what the words of the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλια) were and understand what the meaning placed in them was. A νομικός, that is, one who meditated on the commandments of the Law (νόμος) of Moses and promised to teach them to those who did not know them, questioned Jesus, to test him: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" After our Savior had said, "This is written in the Law (νόμος)," and added, "What do you read there?" to show his vanity, since on the one hand he read for others and on the other did not understand for himself, this man, still elevating himself with pride (φυσιούμενος), pronounced the commandments with his tongue, opening his mouth very gravely and saying: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your strength, with all your soul, and with all your spirit, and your neighbor as yourself." After he had repeated these (commandments) with a haughty spirit, Jesus, the wise teacher and our God, using both gentleness and reproach, commanded him to do what he had said, saying: "You have answered well, do this and you will live!" But when the teacher of the

Law (νομικός) questioned again, as if under the pretext of a desire to learn (μανθάνειν), he asked: "Who must be regarded as the neighbor whom the Law (νόμος) commands every man to love as himself?" And then our Savior, framing the very answer to this (question) in a parable, said: "A man was going from one city to another; having been attacked by thieves, he was captured: and after being stripped of his clothes and covered with wounds and truly becoming nothing but a wound, he lay half-dead (ἡμιθανής). A priest saw this (man) and, turning away, passed by. A Levite saw him but gave him no care; and, remaining unmoved and feeling no pain, he went beyond this spectacle which should have excited greater pity than anything. Now a Samaritan who was on the road found himself facing him; and it is not with the eyes, but above all with the thoughts and the mercy of his heart that he looked attentively at the one lying on the ground. Kneeling beside him, he applied suitable care to his wounds, pouring wine and oil on them and carefully binding them with bandages. And having placed him on a donkey, he led him to an inn and showed him much solicitude there.

Tell me now, without looking at me with scrutinizing and evil eyes, O teacher of the Law (νομικός), who for you is the neighbor, but who for him, the one who needed to be well treated (συναντάω) has by the very facts become the neighbor? You, indeed, often think in ignorance that the one who shares the same religion or nationality as you is your neighbor; and I say and define that the one who shares the same nature and is a man is the neighbor. For as you see, indeed, the one who lifted his brow with pride because of his resemblance to a person (πρόσωπον) (clothed) with the priesthood and the one who boasted of his title of Levite and fulfilled the functions of the priestly ministry by exercising the priesthood according to the Law (νόμος), who equally gloried, as you also do, in knowing the divine commandments, did not even think that the one who was of the same race (γένος) (as them), who was naked, who was covered with incurable wounds, who was lying on the ground, who was about to die immediately, was a man; but they despised him as a stone or a piece of wood thrown in vain. And the Samaritan, he who did not know the commandments of the Law, he who among you has the reputation of a fool and an ignorant one—for even a wise man has said: 'Those who are established in the mountain of Samaria (and) the Philistines and the foolish people who dwell in Shechem'—recognized the (human) nature and understood who is the neighbor, and the one who for you, judges, is very distant

has become very near to the one who needed a remedy. Do not, therefore, confine the definition of the neighbor within a Jewish narrowness and within narrow measures, thinking that only the relatives of your race, as the prophet Isaiah says, are the closest; for every person to whom the spirit of charity (φιλανθρωπία) is extended is the neighbor.

It is according to this simple and accessible meaning that the words of the parable placed before us have this significance and (this) interpretation that fits and suits the very words to see only the exterior and the surface; but there is in them a deep and very mystical contemplation (θεωρία) for those who can spiritually consider the intimate expressions (λέξεις), as much as it is possible to grasp it; for each of them is full, and as it were pregnant with meaning, because such is also the nature (εἶδος) of the parables: on the one hand, to manifest and show a small number of things that are clear to everyone and thus comprehensible and that attract the listeners, and on the other hand, to hide and conceal according to various meanings a great number of things that stimulate the desire to seek them. This is why the disciples themselves were accustomed to say to our Savior: "Explain to us the parable of the tares and the field (ζιζάνιον)." Peter also said: "Explain to us this parable." Another time again, as all the disciples had asked: "Why do you speak to the crowds in parables?" Jesus himself answered: "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Therefore, on the occasion of this parable which is before us and which we propose to comment on, let us also run toward the mystical and hidden (aspect) of these meanings, asking the divine Spirit, who distributes to each one the particular and proper (gifts) as He wills, that He reveal to us according to the measure of our weakness (the thoughts) that can (be revealed) and that they may be profitable for those who receive them, without harming them by their loftiness.

What, then, is the proper story of the parable? "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho." It is with reason that (our Savior) used the designation of the genus (γένος) and did not say: "One was going down," but: "A man (was going down)." For it was a question of all humanity; indeed, by the transgression of the commandment by Adam, it fell from the dwelling of Paradise, which is high, elevated, calm, free from passion, and divine, and which on this occasion was very rightly named Jerusalem—which means the peace of God—until Jericho, which is

(a city) situated in a valley, low and stifled by heat, and which makes known that the life of the passions of this world separates from God, draws downward, causes turmoil by the ardor of shameful desires, produces anguish, and determines death.

Once humanity had let itself fall to this (life), had been overthrown and drawn downward, and had gradually been led thereafter to the lowest parts, as I have said, a gathering of barbarian demons attacked it in the manner of a band of thieves (ληστής); (these demons) stripped it of the garments of perfection, leaving it no trace of strength, nor of chastity, nor of justice, nor of wisdom, nor of anything that represents the divine image; and thus, by the repeated wounds of various sins, they slaughtered and killed it, to put it briefly, leaving it half-dead (ἡμιθανής). And this truly shows well that the whole story concerns contemplation (θεωρία); for thieves (ληστής) and robbers are accustomed to first cause wounds in order to then strip the wounded of their garments. But the demons, the intellectual thieves (ληστής), do not at all have the facility to wound if they do not first remove the garments of virtues, and after that they wound without pity and unto death; for it is not (our) garments, but indeed our ruin and our killing that they desire; this is why Our Lord wisely said: "They stripped him"; and then: "They wounded him." When, therefore, humanity was lying on the ground—and behold, it had almost lost consciousness and was dying—the Law (νόμος) given through Moses saw it: this, indeed, is then marked by the priest as well as by the Levite; for the Law (νόμος) is the teacher of the Levitical priesthood. But on the one hand it saw it, and on the other hand it lacked energy and strength, it was not capable of bringing about a complete healing, and it did not raise up (humanity) which was lying on the ground; and, having lacked energy, it necessarily departed after (this) fruitless step. For it is through its intermediary, as Paul says, that sacrifices and offerings were presented which could not perfect the conscience of those who performed this ministry, because it was equally impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to completely remove sins.

This is why Our Lord did not say: "The priest—and: The Levite—having seen the half-dead man (ἡμιθανής) who was lying on the ground, passed him by"; but: "He turned to the opposite side." He did not pass him by, he says, leaving him aside without seeing him; but he stood (near him) and saw him, he thought to heal him and touched him, and, having found himself powerless for healing and having been

overcome by the gravity of the wounds, that is, of the passions, he turned back running; for this is what the (word) shows: "He turned to the opposite side."

Finally, a Samaritan who was on the road came to where he was and, having seen him, had pity on him; approaching, he cared for him by pouring wine and oil and binding his wounds. And here it is rightly that Christ called himself "Samaritan." Because he was addressing, indeed, a teacher of the Law (νομικός) who greatly gloried in the Law (νόμος), he applied himself to show by what was said that it is neither the priest, nor the Levite, nor, to speak generally, those who believed they conducted themselves according to the commandments of Moses, but that it is he himself who has come to fulfill the will of the Law (νόμος) and to show by the very facts who truly is the neighbor and what is the (word): "One shall love this (neighbor) as oneself," he whom the Jews insultingly said: "You are a Samaritan and have a demon," whom they often accused of voiding the Law (νόμος). And in another sense, there is no one who does not find that this designation of Samaritan applied to Christ does not suit, although in any way it seems to be insulting. Indeed, when the Assyrian Shalmaneser took Israel captive and deported them to the banks of the rivers of Media, as it is written in the IV (book) of Kings, he sent inhabitants of the land from Babylon in place of the captives and established them in these cities. And because the lions killed them under the pretext that they did not live in the ancestral customs of those who conducted themselves according to the Law (νόμος) of Moses, he sent a man taken from among these captives—this one was from the number of the priests—who taught them these customs, and thus (the Babylonians) occupied these cities, calling themselves "Samaritans" as they were the guardians of the land, because indeed "guard" and "guardian" are equally called "shomer" (שׁוֹמֵר) in the Hebrew language. And who would deny that Christ is the true guardian of all the earth and that he possesses the universe, he in whom we also live, move, and have our being? But it must be known that some say that those who inhabit the land of Israel are called "Samaritans" for another reason as well, namely because they occupy the mountain of Samaria which Omri, king of Israel, had acquired, after buying it for two talents of silver from Shemer, the owner of the mountain, as it is written. We, however, who (wish) to draw from this word a meaning that suits what we have proposed to comment on, do not argue about the variable signification or the reason by virtue of which this appellation was given; for there is in each of these (significations) something that can convince and that is

true at the same time. This Samaritan who was on the road—it is Christ—therefore saw the one who was lying on the ground. For he had truly set out on the road, and he did not pass by, because he took as a pretext for the journey the very fact of visiting us, us for whom he descended to the earth and with whom he stayed. Indeed, he was not only seen, but he also lived with men, when he truly became man outside of (all) change and (all) imagination (φαντασία). For it is the mark of true and charitable physicians to live in the company of (their) sick and not to distance themselves from them before their return to health. It follows from this that he also poured wine, that is, the word that instructs and reproves, on the wounds; he also gave us, indeed, the drink of repentance, as the prophet of the Psalms says. Because we could not truly bear it unmixed—for the gravity, malignancy, and incurable state of the wounds could not bear such great acridity—he mixed oil with it. This is why he also sat at table with sinners and with publicans, and to the Pharisees who loved reproaches (φιλέντοξοι), who accused him and reproached him for his charity (φιλανθρωπία), he said: "Go, learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifices."

The one, therefore, who had been the object of such solicitude in terms of care, he also placed, it is said, on a beast of burden. Because indeed, as it is written, man, when he was in honor, did not show himself intelligent, but he assimilated himself to the senseless beast and became like it and made himself sick with all bestial and impure concupiscence, after having made himself the firstfruits of our race (γένος), Christ, who knows no sin, first showed in himself that we have risen and elevated ourselves above these bestial passions, once we have trampled them underfoot: he himself, indeed, took our infirmities and bore our diseases. This is why he said: "The one who had obtained these cares, he made him mount his donkey"; for it is in himself that he carried us, because we are the members of his body. But moreover: he also led him to the inn. And he calls πανδοχεῖον, that is, inn—which translates as "(place) receiving all"—the Church which has become capable of receiving and which shelters all men. Indeed, we no longer hear according to the narrowness of the legal shadow and figurative worship: "The Ammonite and the Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the Lord"; but (we hear): "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"; and: "In every nation, he who fears (God) and practices justice is capable of being received by him." And, once he had led him to the inn, he showed him

even greater solicitude. Indeed, after the Church had been formed from the gathering of nations dying in polytheism (πολυθεΐα), it was Christ himself who dwells in it and speaks in it, as it is written, and who grants all spiritual grace. It follows from this that he had also given two denarii (δηνάριον) to the one who stood at the head of the inn—let us understand that this one symbolized the Apostles, as well as the pastors and teachers who succeeded them when he ascended to heaven—having enjoined him the order to have a very particular solicitude for the sick, and he added: "If you spend something more, I will repay you when I return." He calls "two denarii (δηνάριον)" the two Testaments (Διαθήκη), the Old and the New, the one given through the Law (νόμος) of Moses and the Prophets and the other given through the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλιον) and the commandments of the Apostles, which both belong to one God, who, like the denarii (δηνάριον), bears a single image of this one king from on high and who by the holy words imprints and marks in our hearts the same royal effigy (εἰκών), because indeed it is equally one and the same Spirit who pronounced them.

Perish Manes and, before him, (perish) Marcion, the atheists, who divide these (Testaments) among different gods! Indeed, these two denarii (δηνάριον) belonged to one king and were given by Christ at the same time and with the same honor to the one who stood at the head of the inn. After the pastors of the holy Churches received them, increased them by their teachings at the cost of labor and sweat, spent them of themselves, and by the expense rather increased them—for such is the intellectual money, which is the word of teaching, that it does not diminish by expenses, but multiplies and grows—when Our Lord returns on the last day, each of them will say to him: "Lord, you gave me two denarii (δηνάριον), behold, after spending them of myself, I have gained two others by which I have increased and multiplied the flock"; and as an answer (Christ) will say to him: "Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful in little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your Lord."

Having therefore read this formerly according to the tradition of the Fathers—for I now come to the subject of the reproach—the sacred preacher called out to you, urging you to pay with small pieces of cloth for the coming of Christ which is so great, for the care and relief of those suffering from leprosy and whose body is enveloped by rot and bad odor like a walking tomb or those afflicted with some

other illness. To put it briefly, no one among you seemed to have heard this call, except that by chance one or two good women, having thrown dirty and very torn coins and remnants (taken) from old and worn-out clothes, judged to have satisfied the law (νόμος) and, pretending (σχῆμα) hypocritically only to throw pieces, fulfill the habitual (obligation). And yet, after the Law (νόμος) and the Prophets, Christ did not leave us aside, when we had no more hope and had already been counted among the dying. But he descended from the height, when he participated in the same essence (οὐσία) as us except for sin and submitted to becoming man without change, so that he might also accept the trial of the cross, burial, and descent into Sheol, and this although by nature he is God—while, by the very fact that he became man, he endured all this—and he passed impassibly through all these (states) from which it was necessary to raise us, we who had fallen, we whose bones were scattered near Sheol, as the prophet David says. Indeed, because we could not stand, buried as we were by chance below—and why say: stand?—because we could not even lift an eye toward heaven, it is he himself who, as Paul says, after descending into the lower regions of the earth, drew out those who had absolutely no hope of salvation, when he became very near to those who were very far away. This is why he questions this teacher of the Law (νομικός), showing him the immensity of this charity (φιλανθρωπία) that surpasses all: "Which of these three seems to you to have been the neighbor of the one who fell among the thieves?" But we who hear these (words), or rather (μᾶλλον δὲ) we who have been judged worthy of these (words), have given him no piece of cloth, not even a used one. For the one who asked was the very one who said: "Truly, I say to you, as often as you did (these things) to one of the least of my brothers, you did it to me." Indeed, tell me, as we proclaim Joseph, (the man) of Arimathea, the counselor (βουλευτής), blessed, who asked Pilate to allow him to bury the life-giving body (ζωοποιός) of Jesus and who thus covered it with a cloth of linen! And we forget that having, we too, the possibility of obtaining the same honor and the same thanks as him or greater than him, as often as it is now in our power to relieve the Christ full of ulcers and wounded, we deprive ourselves of these outstanding favors and push far from us such a great advantage. But if a king were to stay with us, we would give him all the clothes we had in the house as well as the silk garments we would take out of the chests on occasion, so that he might wrap himself in them, walk on them, use them contrary to decency, and even carry them away, (and this) in the hope of some temporary honor. And Christ, the king of the superior spirits,

the powers, and the (heavenly) armies, who presents himself to us wounded in his whole body and (who) for a small piece (of cloth) promises to give the kingdom of heaven, goes away without having been given anything. See the greatness and nature of your folly, and bend toward the one who is of our race (γένος) and who suffers from an illness.

Let no one tell me that the day when it was necessary to throw the pieces (of cloth) has passed! Indeed, if in the Law (νόμος) there was the commandment to celebrate the Passover in the first month (in use) among the Hebrews and if someone, having abstained from the solemnity for a proper and just reason, could offer the sacrifice of the Passover in the second month, how is it not unreasonable that, when it comes to compassion where any time is proper and opportune, we are held back and prevented from (doing) what is fitting because the day has passed, when the sacred Books say: "Do not prevent doing good (εὐεργετεῖν) to the one in need, (nor) from helping him when it is in your power; do not say: Go and come back tomorrow and I will give you, when you can do good (εὐεργετεῖν) For you do not know what the next day will bring." Do not, therefore, postpone my words to the next year, but imagine that it is today that the past Sunday falls. And let each of you throw the handkerchief (ἐντατόλιον) hanging from his neck with which one is accustomed to wipe one's nose; and you, woman, please Christ by giving the cloth you carry on your hand. These objects, indeed, are worth only a few obols; but they procure a heavenly reward and deliver from all illness and (all) wound both you and your children whose salvation, I know well, concerns you greatly. For if you return to your houses without these (pieces) of cloth in question, you will have a crowd of angels who will enter with you and guard your house and also Christ himself entirely, the Lord of the angels, who will be inside (your dwellings). After having done this, do not believe you have done something great. Indeed, Gideon—he is a judge of Israel—having defeated the Midianites or Ishmaelites who had marched armed against him, also said after the victory to those who had been saved by him and who had lined up with him in battle order: "I have a request to make to you: Give me each a ring from your booty; the enemies had many rings, for they were Ishmaelites. They said to him: We will give (them). And each spread his cloak and threw a gold ring from his booty on it." If, therefore, these gave such a quantity of gold to the leader of the combat, and this when they had lined up with him in battle order, because they had escaped a temporary servitude, is it a great

thing for us to give a small number of (pieces) of cloth to Christ, to the one who delivered our whole race (γένος) from the Slanderer and the demons, (these) irreconcilable and implacable enemies, and won the combat that we could not win, to the one whom the armies in the heavens have also recognized as returning from combat and having won the victory, when after the salutary passion and the resurrection he departed toward the heights, saying: "The Lord is mighty and strong, the Lord is strong in battle." Indeed, he pierced with (his) cross the prince of darkness and wickedness as well as his wicked militia and also gave them in spectacle, as Paul says, when by himself he covered them with contempt in all freedom (παρρησία). To him be praise and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

**HOMILY 90 CATECHESIS DELIVERED ACCORDING TO CUSTOM FOR THOSE WHO WERE TO BE BAPTIZED ON THE VERY GLORIOUS DAY OF EASTER AND THE RESURRECTION, WHEN THEY WERE GATHERED IN GREAT NUMBERS. THIS IS THE FOURTH CATECHESIS.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Upon seeing this spiritual assembly, I believed I saw not only men but also a gathering of the heavenly orders, which, having mingled invisibly among you, are present, surrounding you externally, completing the one flock, and addressing the Church's assembly—namely, angels, archangels, powers, dominions, and all that Paul enumerated, every spirit or intellectual and immaterial name, whether now named or to be known in the age to come. And this is most justly so. Indeed, as it is written, these are spirits serving as ministers sent to minister for those who are to inherit salvation. At this moment, the greatest and most perfect salvation is near, present, and at hand—I speak of the salvation of those who are to receive divine baptism, which truly provides the matter and subject of this homily, and the salvation you possess, faithful ones, who approach the mysteries alongside the initiates and, with the eyes of the spirit, draw near boldly to what is said. How could they remain apart? And how could these ministers of salvation not shine forth and come with joy, not singly or in pairs, but with all the orders and choirs? For them, it is an endless joy and pleasure that the knowledge of God, the communication, and the flow of the exalted light above all things are established not only in them but also spread over many, distributed and poured out upon every rational soul and nature capable of sharing in such a blessing. It is absolutely necessary that angels stand near those who teach and those who listen, near those who perfect and those who are perfected, so that the earth has become another heaven. Therefore, one must not be disposed differently in spirit but as if standing at this very moment in the heavens themselves, gathered with the angels, and celebrating with the heavenly hosts.

Because the catechetical homily itself holds, in a way, the place of a preordained testimony and a preemptive commandment—for it speaks and testifies in advance to those approaching the divine bath not to turn back—the angels are present here, attesting to our words and recording the commitments these individuals make to Christ. This is easily seen in Paul's similar action when he wrote to Timothy: "I

charge you before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels to keep these things without reproach, doing nothing out of hypocrisy." But as we advance, the word has shown us that not only the angels but God the Father Himself, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—certainly—are thus present everywhere and fill the universe. The evident proof is the word of Christ our Savior, which says: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst." He Himself also united what is below with what is above, reconciling through the blood of His cross both what is on earth and what is in heaven, as the Apostle wrote to the Colossians. Who, then, would not tremble, even with a heart of stone, thinking that on one hand he stands in the heavens and on the other is surrounded by thousands and myriads of angels, approaching the very light of the holy Trinity present here and being illuminated by it?

Indeed, we confess that we believe in the Almighty Father, Creator of heaven and earth, truly of all things visible and invisible; and in the only Lord Jesus Christ, His only Son, begotten of Him—that is, of His own essence—before all ages and eternally, of the same essence as the Father; and in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father without beginning, timelessly and eternally, and is of the same essence as the Father and the Son. Paul himself rightly said: "Now the principalities and powers in the heavens have known through the Church the infinitely varied wisdom of God." For the cherubim, whose name means "the multitude of knowledge"—as the Hebrew language shows—because they are depicted with many faces and through these reveal the richness of contemplation, because they shine entirely with many eyes and gleam like very bright stars, demonstrating their vigilance and enlightenment, because they rise and fly with many wings, showing their speed, lightness, elevation, and mobility—for it is through these bodily appearances and names, as well as signs and symbols, that we gradually understand these incorporeal beings and know their nature and condition. The cherubim, for their part, drew to themselves the knowledge or imagination of the likeness of the Lord's glory, and in this mere participation, they scarcely enjoyed not the glory itself but the likeness of the Lord's glory—how much less could they enjoy the essence of God? Or rather, they are far removed from it. It is easy to hear the words of the one who saw this concerning the cherubim—the prophet Ezekiel: "It is," he said, "the vision of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." Similarly, the seraphim, whose name translates in Greek to "the spirits who

stand on high," because, as if standing above and higher than the other hosts, they intently aspire to the height of divine contemplation, as much as possible, desiring and delighting to draw something more from the inconceivable and insatiable beauty and light. They, too, are endowed with many wings for the reason stated earlier—as the prophet Isaiah saw them—with some wings they rise in flight, hastening in their desire toward the Beloved and, as it were, daring to surpass the unsurpassable; with others, they restrain the forward-rushing desire and hide their faces, lest, approaching the exceedingly high with their whole face and unable to endure it, they lose even the degree of illumination that would descend upon them. For what exceeds the power of vision, even if seen for a very short time—or rather, sought—extinguishes sight rather than illuminating it. Therefore, as before, the fleeting flash, before one can think to see it, also causes the eye to close, forbidding the gaze out of fear. Hence, it is also written of the aforementioned hosts that they not only hid their faces but completely covered even their feet with their other wings, truly showing fear and dread. For it is a sign of fear to look within oneself and withdraw inward. While the seraphim thus surrounded the royal and lofty throne, what did Isaiah say? That he heard them cry: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." This perfect theology or divine discourse of the Trinity, which was then uttered and sung by the higher, incorporeal hosts as in a riddle, has now been revealed and understood by those who are baptized and confess that they believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

For when by this word repeated three times, implying equal honor, the three hypostases of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinguished, and their "non-confusion" is illuminated by the very fact that it is said: "Holy, holy, holy," they are likewise united in one lordship and divinity by what follows: "The Lord of hosts." For the lordship and divinity of the three hypostases are one. And this "Lord of Sabaoth" reveals the Lord of hosts—that is, of the heavenly orders and armies—because He who is comprehended in unity and trinity as founder, creator, and author is the Lord and God not only of the visible creation but also of the invisible. Thus, the Psalmist also says somewhere: "He makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flaming fire." And when I consider all the glory of the seraphim, the wonder of God's love for humanity extends and spreads over me. For to the words previously spoken—"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts"—Isaiah added this: "The whole earth is full of His glory." And though it should truly be

said that the heavens especially are full of His glory yet he did not say so, because this glory, then shown obscurely and enigmatically to the heavenly beings—as we have said—the only-begotten Son and Word made known in the last days when He descended, was incarnate, became man, and lived among us who are human, filling the whole earth with the glory in the Trinity, when He preached the name once hidden and secret and revealed that He who was begotten of Him before the ages is and is called the Father, that He Himself is the Son, and that He who proceeds from the Father is the Spirit of truth and the Holy Spirit.

Thus, He also said to the Apostles: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Therefore, when He was about to go to the cross, He also said to the Father: "I have revealed Your name to men;" and again: "Righteous Father, the world has not known You, but I have known You, and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them and will make it known." And though God's name was not unknown to all men, so to speak, even before His coming in the flesh, yet it was a hidden and secret thing that God was the Father. You might say that the pagans also acknowledged Him as Father, saying, "the Father of men and gods." But since the true Son, of the same essence and nature, was hidden and unknown, the Father was necessarily confessed falsely; for the knowledge of the Son is the true and undoubted revelation of the Father, about which there is no dispute. "He who has seen Me," He said, "has seen the Father." Therefore, He said: "Righteous Father, the world has not known You, but I have known You"—that is, "not as the world imagined it knew You, but as I alone know You; I have made Your name known, by which it is known of Me that You sent Me." For He added: "These also have known that You sent Me," so that the knowledge of the Son was indeed the knowledge that God was also the true Father.

Let no one, taking humanly the words the Son spoke to the Father—"But I have known You"—think that He had a knowledge of the Father acquired through ignorance or recently gained. Rather, let it be considered in a manner worthy of God, as something natural and eternal in Him, as Matthew said of the Father: "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." This is what the seraphim truly cried: "The whole earth is full of His glory." For after the glory was poured out on

earth by the only-begotten, it also ascended to the heavens themselves, so that the love for the Church gave the spirits above a clearer knowledge and understanding. Hence, the Evangelist John said: “The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” For it belonged to no one among men but to Him alone, when He descended to earth, to show and reveal the adorable name of the Trinity—and this not yet as it is, but as we grasp it. Therefore, when we also offer the spiritual and reasonable sacrifice, crying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts,” when we confess that the lordship is one in the three hypostases, when we fulfill the glory of the seraphim and wish to show clearly that no one taught us the knowledge of this name’s confession but the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, who is one of the holy Trinity, who also became incarnate for us without change and became man—to the Trisagion we immediately add the thanksgiving: “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,” showing that if He who will come again in the Father’s name had not come Himself, we would not be worthy to utter with our mouths this hymn of glory, which the heavenly hosts sang and spoke with great effort, fear, and ineffably. And this phrase—”Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts”—was fitting and ascended to the holy Trinity generally and particularly to each hypostasis, whether the word “holy” is said three times or once. For if someone, fixing his gaze, so to speak, on the Father and His person alone, glorified Him by the word “holy” repeated three times or called Him “thrice holy,” or did the same separately for the Son or the Holy Spirit, he would not deviate from what is proper. For the Trisagion is proper to each hypostasis while also fitting the others. Indeed, the hypostases, partaking of the same essence and from which comes one divinity and lordship, necessarily partake of the Trisagion and the praise and glory of the doxology ascending to them.

Moreover, if someone, embracing with the intellect, as far as possible, the holy Trinity as a whole and at once, directed toward it both his word and thought, and embraced at the same time this thrice-holy glory, applying separately to each hypostasis one “holy” to one, another to the second, and another to the third, he would not fall from orthodoxy. For the unity and identity of essence make this glory common, and the “non-confusion” and property of the hypostases make it special. Because this knowledge was to descend to us, the seraphim said: “The whole earth is full of His glory.” For after it received the true and incarnate coming of God, how could it not be filled with glory and compared to the heavens in

magnanimity, while also changing roles and raising the glory and full knowledge that should have descended from above? Such is the wealth poured out on us by Him who "emptied Himself"—not by ceasing to be full but by willingly becoming poor and sharing in our poverty—so that we ourselves are full instead of empty and rich instead of poor. Proclaiming this wealth and complete, abundant grace in advance, the prophet Isaiah said: "The whole earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas." Let us not depart from this more complete praise and perfect doxology, which was mystically sung and is still sung by the seraphim and their neighboring hosts, and which was revealed to those on earth by the only-begotten, through which the holy Trinity, equal in essence, is truly confessed and glorified without confusion or division. But let us take it in its entirety, leaving nothing of the holy Trinity unspoken, but truly praising and glorifying it with the heavenly hosts in equal honor as equal in essence, without raving with the follies of Arius, which fight and contend equally against glory!

For they, as far as in them lies, bring down from the royal throne the only Word, who reigns and is seated with the Father, numbering Him among the creatures and the ministering spirits in heaven, as if He had come to be among things that were not and as if He were not with the Father eternally. They say that Paul called the Son "the firstborn of all creation"; "there is thus a necessity," they say, "as the brother of creatures, that He be called the firstborn of all creation." But to say this belongs only to the foolish and adversaries of nature and the order of things. For they should be guided by the quality of expressions and the pronunciation of words to the meanings fitting the facts before us, and discern their differences, knowing clearly that "firstborn" indicates generation and identity of essence and nature—for someone begets a son from himself and does not make him—while "creation" indicates the state of what is made—for all creation, whether unseen or visible, is made. How, then, can the same one be both the firstborn Son and numbered among the creatures as something made? If Paul meant this—to show that He is the firstborn of creation—he should have said: "the firstborn of the other creation" or "of the rest of creation." But the phrase "all creation" shows this: that He is distinct, set apart, outside all creation, as begotten before all ages and not made. For the ages themselves, which the Father made through Him along with other things, are also part of all creation. He is, indeed, "the radiance of glory and the image of the hypostasis" of the Father, which shone forth from His own essence

without departing and from all eternity. If He were created or made, He would necessarily have been made and created before the other creatures in a portion and space of time belonging to the ages—a brief moment, one might think. Thus, the Son Himself, the only-begotten, of whom it is written that He is the "author of the ages", would not be the author of this portion. On the contrary, if one thinks of Him as "the firstborn of all creation" in the sense of being a brother to creatures and not as begotten before all ages, how could He who has many brothers and is numbered with other creatures truly be called the only-begotten? For He is called both the only-begotten and the firstborn, so that by "only-begotten" we may drive away the foolish thought arising from "firstborn" that is unworthy of God, considering only that He is begotten before all ages and thus no longer placing Him first or honoring Him with an ungodly precedence, as if the other creatures were His own sisters. For the phrase "the firstborn of all creation" implies rejection, separation, and removal, not participation and likeness, to the point that we place Him at the head of things like Him. It is because of His humanity, having partaken of the same essence as us and in all things accepted likeness to us except sin, that He is fittingly called "the firstborn among many brethren" as the second Adam of our race and "the firstborn from the dead" as the firstfruits of our second formation and the resurrection leading to incorruption.

"But He Himself clearly said in the Gospels: "My Father is greater than I"," you might reply. But you should not hear this in passing, for the same Gospels say: "The Father who gave Me is greater than all, and no one can snatch them from My Father's hand. I and the Father are one." For because, having become man for us without change, He became one among all things and was counted among all things—certainly among things considered after God—without casting off His divine elevation, due to the words "He is greater than Him", I will say it refers to the Father; and due to "He is even greater than all", I will say it follows that all things were given to Him by the Father—things that truly belonged to Him and of which He was the owner as God; and due to the identity of essence, I will say: "I and the Father are one." Thus, "greater" pertains to the economy of the Incarnation, while "one" pertains to the equality of honor in divinity. Therefore, the jealous Jewish people, who fight against God, indignant at what was said, sought to stone Him, saying: "Because You, being a man, make Yourself God." For it is for the same reason of voluntary self-emptying that He says He was "sent by the Father",

“received the commandment”, and “can do nothing of Himself”. But we know that when He was in the form of God and condescended to take the form of a servant, He spoke words befitting servitude and obedience, which in no way diminish or lessen the height and loftiness of His divinity. For how could the condescension and humility of words suited to the economy produce a lessening of the divine essence or power? If the ignorant were to take the words “The Father is greater than I” as a comparison in divinity, how could a creature compare himself to the Uncreated? For it is things that are alike, not those completely different by nature, that are compared. And if Christ is “the power of God and the wisdom of God”, would it not be unreasonable to say that the Father is stronger or wiser because of His wisdom and power? In no way is the Son inferior to the Father, for He possesses the same glory, kingship, eternity, and power as Him.

Paul says He is “the image of the invisible God, the radiance of His glory and the image of His hypostasis”—for the image contains all the traits of the original—so that He is properly an image, not an artificial and lifeless image made skillfully like our images, nor in the sense that we are said to be in the image and likeness of God, partaking of His grace, but the effigy of the likeness and the proper imprint of the Father’s hypostasis, which the image also is, so that He is the hypostatic life of life, the light of light, the endless power of infinite and limitless power. Where, then, shall we place “greater” here, since everywhere we first encounter equality in all things, unless one is forced to say that because the Son is from the Father, though He shone forth from Him timelessly and eternally as the radiance of the Father’s glory, He is not equal in eternity to the One who makes Him shine forth? Yet this causes no inferiority to the Son. For just as it is great for the Son to be begotten by the Father eternally and without beginning, so it is great and a mark of God-worthy glory for the Father to have a Son equal in eternity, who cannot be acquired or added. If the Son were considered inferior to the Father because He is not the Father, would the Father also be deficient because He is not the Son? But this belongs to jesters, not theologians. For “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” are designations that characterize and clearly show the “non-confusion” of the hypostases; they do not define the Trinity by superiority or inferiority. Indeed, all that is in the Father and the Son is also in the Holy Spirit. Foreshadowing this, the prophet David said to the Father: “In Your light we shall see light”—that is, in the Son we shall see the Holy Spirit. For when He appeared through the flesh, the Son

Himself revealed Him, and it is through the Spirit that the Son Himself is revealed most brightly. This is what the great Gregory, the namesake of signs and wondrous miracles—or rather, the one who uncovered the faith—also said: "One Holy Spirit, who holds His existence from the Father and is shown by the Son—to men, certainly—the perfect of the perfect, just as the Son is also the image of the Father, saying: "He who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. I, the light, have come into the world." For the hypostases show one another, because the divinity in the three possesses one and the same honor.

A listener might ask, either out of a desire to learn due to ignorance or as a disputation due to cunning: "If the Holy Spirit also holds His eternal existence from the Father, why is He not also considered and called the Son?" Because it is not written that He is begotten, but that He proceeds from the theology. These designations, bounded by precise limits, while similar, reveal facts and are not empty words. Just as I never say the Son is the Holy Spirit because He does not proceed but is begotten, so it is impious to say the Holy Spirit is the Son because He did not proceed by generation. For if this were so, there would also be the fault that the Son would falsify the designation of "only-begotten." For if there are two sons, how could one of them be the only-begotten? But the generation must remain attached to the Son, and the procession to the Spirit, just as the Father's property is neither begotten nor from anything. For when the properties of each hypostasis remain unchangeable, and we believe the essence or divinity is one in the three—without confusion or division—then we confess the holy Trinity as it truly is, without inquiring into the nature of divine generation and procession or their difference, and the holy Trinity knows itself as it is. It is important for us to confess without alteration what the only-begotten Son in the Father's bosom has told and explained to us, and not to dare, out of disputation, to peer into these mysterious and hidden questions. For what He Himself has said suffices for the modest in place of all demonstration. Where do you yourself say these things, as if they were not His? Therefore, I hold it as a rule that you must neither say this nor ask what He Himself did not say; for He passed over in silence what He knew clearly surpassed profound ignorance.

As for what must be said to us by those who fight against the Holy Spirit—what has been encountered on one hand with wickedness and iniquity, and on the other

with ignorance and lack of understanding—we must also guard ourselves and be preserved from it. For they say: "It is written concerning the Son: “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made.” Now, the Holy Spirit is also somehow included among all things. Therefore, He was created by the Son when He came into existence with the other things. This is a deceptive controversy, stemming from sophistry, which is frailer than a spider’s web. For who, with sound thoughts, would not confess that the divine essence (“ousia”) is not counted or placed among all things, nor enclosed with them, because it is above all? How, then, could the Son create the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, as one of the other things that were made? For just as He who was begotten by the eternal Father is in no way considered the author of His own generation, by the same necessity, He is not (the author) of the procession of the Spirit. “For if (the Spirit) proceeds from the Father in terms of essence (“ousia”), how is He created by the Son?”

“How can He who is created also be counted and ranked with the Father and the Son?” For it is said: “Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” And the Evangelist himself also used great caution in the words that follow, saying: “And without Him nothing was made of what was made”, so that the word indeed encompasses all things that were created, without touching the essence (“ousia”), which is neither made nor created and is divine. Yet sometimes the Arians and those who followed them, ashamed of such manifest blasphemies, fight against the Holy Spirit alone. Differing in nothing from those who have but one eye, they say: “We say that the Son or the Holy Spirit are neither creatures nor of the same essence (“ousia”) as the Father. We profess, indeed, that they existed before all creatures.” What, then, lies between the uncreated essence (“ousia”) and the created one, O vain and senseless theologian? Explain it to me, so that I may place the Son and the Holy Spirit there—unless there is nothing; for it is impossible for you to say. Indeed, all things that come after the divine essence (“ousia”) are made and created, even if they had the privilege of existing before other things. Let the matter of the Manichaeans, which is not made, be uprooted and cast far away, along with the darkness that came from it! It is certain that you elevate the Son and the Holy Spirit to the essence (“ousia”) of God the Father if you are truly ashamed to call them created. And if you say that they existed before other things and are posterior to the Father,

you have honored them only with the antiquity of time, without delivering them from the fact of creation and without knowing that you are struggling against the Holy Scriptures, which say: “There shall be no new god among you, and you shall not worship a foreign god.” For everything that is not eternal, even if it is initial and ancient, is in some way new, as is clear from the word concerning the gods. And what is new is foreign to the divine essence (“ousia”) and is not to be worshiped.

But I return to the seraphim and the vision (“theoria”) of the prophet. For besides the theology (“theologia”), there is also in it the wonder of the economy that took place for us, which is incomprehensible and difficult to understand. Isaiah says that he saw an altar and a coal placed upon it, and one of the seraphim, who at that moment covered their faces with their wings and could not behold the brightness of the divine glory. (The seraph) took the coal with tongs, touched the mouth (of the prophet), and said: “Behold, this (coal) has touched your lips; it will take away your iniquities and blot out your sins.” Now, it is clear to everyone that the coal symbolizes Emmanuel, who, seated on the high and exalted throne surrounded by the seraphim with the Father and the Holy Spirit—as the thrice-holy glory (“doxologia”) has made known—descended voluntarily to us and became man without change. For such is His descent: that He did not pass from one place to another—which is indeed impossible—but while He is wholly in all and above all without limit, He also existed wholly in a body possessing an intellectual soul, not as by some association or mere activity, but in hypostasis and by a natural union. This wonder is astonishing in that, on one hand, it cannot be grasped by words, so that it remains wondrous, and on the other, it is sealed by faith in the God-inspired Book, which says at times: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us”, and at other times: “Because the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same.” Therefore, just as, when speaking of a child or a man like us, we cannot say how the soul partook of flesh and blood, how an excellent union unites them, and how from the soul and the body the whole living being is without confusion one nature and one hypostasis, so we say that the power of the Most High Father, the Word of God, when He dwelt in the Virgin and was hypostatically united to flesh possessing a rational soul—so that He was subject to conception and was born in the flesh in a manner both worthy of God and natural, while the bond of virginity remained unbroken—(we say that He) is

one from two, namely divinity and humanity: one person ("prosopon"), one hypostasis, one nature of God the Word incarnate and made perfectly man. For on one hand, because Mary was by nature a human being (resulting from human formation), she gave according to nature—or rather ("mallon de"), she gave beyond nature, for she was removed from male seed and desire, since it was the Holy Spirit Himself who acted and formed as the agent. On the other hand, the Word of God, who existed before the ages, from the very beginning and from the indivisible moment of the time of the formation or establishment (of the child) in the womb (of Mary), was united in an ineffable manner to flesh endowed with a rational soul, just as the rational soul can be united to the body—or rather ("mallon de"), in a more true and divine manner beyond that. For the union coincided with the establishment or foundation (of the child) in the flesh, and there was the hypostatic union, so that the Word of God Himself, who became incarnate without change, was conceived and born and wondrously showed the Mother of God to be the one who bore Him, is considered as He who had already united to Himself a body capable of being conceived and born. For He acquired a beginning from Mary, not in that He is the Word—for how could He who is in all times and has not changed His condition of being God?—but in that He became man. If Emmanuel appeared as one from the Virgin, how after such a union could we divide Him, saying two natures? For this is a crude division and a destruction of the union. But if, like Nestorius, you first form the child in the Virgin and then introduce and make God dwell in him as in the prophets by a voluntary adherence of affection and love, after such a false and deceptive union, you will necessarily confess that there are two natures.

For you do not speak as Paul: "In the same way as we, the Word partook of blood and flesh", and you openly struggle against the words of the Church's teachers, which reject your divisive adherence. Do you not hear Gregory the Theologian, who writes to Cledonius: "If anyone says that the man was formed first and then God entered by slipping in, he is guilty; for this is not the birth of God, but the flight from birth." I have cited these words compelled by necessity, so that the souls of those who are instructed or those who are new and unstable in the faith may be found unassailable and vigilant against those who flatter Nestorius' impure table and, refusing to hear the orthodox dogmas, now hide themselves somewhere among the flocks. It would be beneficial that, once they appear—even secretly—

we strike them with our deadly arrows in a proper battle. For, as their own ruin is not enough for them, while considering themselves wise, on one hand, to those who are easily swayed by them and whom they can mock and deceive easily, they open their blasphemous mouths, and on the other hand, to those capable of refuting them and showing them the truth, they close their lips and even their ears. And as soon as someone tries to offer them a simple word that could benefit them, because they do not know how to seize the opportunity and are inexperienced, they refuse, bowing, hating the hands, clasping the knees, begging, asking, and prostrating themselves. Why do they not speak simply? And why do they not do what befits slaves, asking for pardon? Why, as fools, do they consider it profitable to avoid being well caught and refuted? Why do they say concerning the faith: “I will defend God,” considering as faith a prejudice that has not been examined? What defense will you have, tell me? While you do not merely examine a coin (“denarion”) with your own judgment as soon as you receive it from your debtor, but also weigh it with the just scale of the tax collector (“demosion”), and if it seems to you to be of copper or counterfeit for another reason, you go to those who can distinguish between the approved and the rejected—do you make absolutely no account of the unexamined faith, but retain it without examination?
Perhaps you will be declared blessed by little women or little men, tainted with the same leprosy as you? And do you not hear the prophet Isaiah, who says: “O my people, those who call you blessed deceive you,” or Jeremiah: “Call them 'rejected silver,' for the Lord has rejected them,” or similarly Paul: “Men corrupt in mind, untested in the faith"?”

Therefore, because it is good that we examine—for we are indeed the object of your examination and concern—come, reflect together with those who are instructed with goodwill (“eunoia”). If you wish, look at the coal that can be grasped, which will show you the truth, even if symbolically. For just as fire that seizes wood, on one hand, takes hold of it, surrounds it, penetrates it deeply, and entirely turns it into fire, and on the other hand, does not transform it to the point that it ceases to be wood—though it has the appearance and power of fire (for all that is in it, the fire does wholly in the wood, which indeed burns and shines)—and from the fire and the wood, which are two, what appears is one coal, no longer divisible into the elements from which it is formed and no longer separable into two, as long as the coal remains unconsumed and not reduced to nothing by the

fire—so understand, as far as possible and as if through lofty contemplations (“theoriai”), that the Word of God, the intellectual Light, united to flesh endowed with an intellectual soul, is one hypostasis of two (elements), without the Word being changed into the body or the body passing into the divine nature—for that is impossible—nor again is the one Christ dissolved back into the elements from which the union was made. For in truth, the flesh, by the fact of the simultaneous germination of the Word united to it, possesses the glory and activity befitting God (“theoprepes”) as qualities already proper to it and no longer divisible. And (the flesh) far surpasses the wood when it produces the operations of fire, so that indeed Christ, the incarnate Word, raises the dead, gives life to those lying on the ground, walks on the sea, appears to the disciples behind closed doors. We can, like one of the seraphim, take Him with the tongs of knowledge; for He has also been touched, “in that He became man”; but like the coal, He is equally ungraspable to those who do not approach with (these) tongs. And most lovingly (“philanthropotatos”), He touches the lips of those who “with the heart believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth confess salvation”, as Paul says.

Hearing this, where are those possessed by the fantasy (“phantasia”) of Eutyches, or rather (“mallon de”), fallen into the filthy mud of the Manichaeans? Will they, ashamed of the brightness of the coal, give Christ true flesh, our own, which they judge unworthy of union with the Word because of its impurity, as they say? For what defilement does God partake in when He wishes to come to our aid? And what impurity is there where there is no sin but, on the contrary, the purity of virginity and the indwelling of the Spirit? Surely none, it is said. "But it is said: Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God, nor corruption inherit incorruption; and I fear to say that the Word of God united Himself to corruption." O lack of knowledge and gross stupidity! They do not know that sometimes the divine Book calls "flesh" and "blood" the essence (“ousia”) of the body or the whole man himself by a part, as in the passage where it says: “Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” Matthew 16:17 and Paul in the letter to the Galatians: “I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me” Galatians 1:16-17—that is, “The revelation I received from God sufficed for me, and among men I shared the counsel concerning this matter with no one.” Galatians 1:12 And the Psalmist likewise: “O God, hear my prayer;

all flesh shall come to You” Psalms 65:2; and in another passage: “Let all flesh bless His holy name” Psalms 145:21; and sometimes it knows how to call "flesh and blood" or simply "flesh" the spirit that considers the pleasure of the flesh, as in the passage where the Apostle says to the Romans: “Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.” Romans 8:8-9 For does he write this to them when they are without bodies, or rather (“mallon de”) when they are pure and freed from the spirit of the flesh? And this is clearly shown by the very one who said these words; for earlier he had said: “The mind of the flesh is death, and the mind of the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it does not submit to the law of God, nor indeed can it.” Romans 8:6-7 It is concerning this same spirit that he said: “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor corruption inherit incorruption.” For if we also say, according to your error, O perfect ones, that the essence (“ousia”) of the flesh and likewise the body itself cannot inherit the kingdom of God and that corruption cannot inherit incorruption, the hope of the resurrection of our bodies is lost to us, and God Himself, who from the beginning formed man, will also be found to be the author of corruption. Do you see that you turn the sword against yourselves and arrive at blasphemous opinions, chasing after this diabolical fantasy (“phantasia”) as after your shadows, leaping without reason (“eike”) like drunken men and going beyond the truth?

Consider the coal with those who have now tasted the word of life, and know to what glory it has made us partake. It is through our flesh capable of suffering that the impassible broke the empire of death, purchasing victory for us. For it is us whom He raised with Himself and made ascend (with Him) to the heavens and to His royal throne above all; for He sits at the right hand of the Father, while He Himself must come for judgment in the same body in which He is now without limits and in which He will also be seen by those who pierced Him, according to the word of the prophet—yet with the glory befitting God (“theoprepes”). Since you have been called to this life, you who are initiated and will receive the true light and be delivered from the terrible slavery of Satan, awake, then, and arise. It is Christ who commands you, not I; for if by the cross, the descent into Hades, and the resurrection from the dead He had not blunted the sting of death—which was indeed the Calumniator’s most hostile spear, a fortress, and a prison cell in a strong

city (prepared) because of us—who could have snatched you from this harsh tyranny, since you had already become the possessions of the Evil One?

For this is what our Savior Himself also said in the Gospels ("Euangelia"): "How can someone enter the house of a strong man and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house." Why, then, do you delay? Why do you not quickly look to the setting sun, renounce the works of darkness, put off the black garment of wickedness, and cast far from you these tyrannical shackles? For this is what it means that you will use the words of freedom by turning to the west. It is not, indeed, to show that the wicked and cruel demon exercises power over any part of creation; for "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof", says He who is its master and creator through the Psalmist, who also cried out in praising Him: "From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is worthy of praise." Turning to Him and looking to the rising sun, pronounce the words of oaths; say clearly: "We will no longer pay tribute to the Evil One; we have become the possession of the King of heaven." Do works conforming to the law and worthy of heaven. You have looked to Christ, the Sun of righteousness; "be radiant with the light of righteous deeds." Hasten to the first place, I mean to Paradise planted in the east; for this is what the outward appearance ("schema") of the position we have now made you take shows, as is the law ("nomos").

Then you will also go to the source of the Jordan, full of the Holy Spirit, purification, and divine fire, in which you will be buried with Christ by burying the old man in the waters. For this reason, we also signify the three-day burial and the resurrection that followed by the triple immersion. What, then, is required of those who have partaken of this grace? Let us hear Paul, who teaches us thus: "We were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall certainly also be (united) in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." What, then, shall we say to you in turn, O you who are about to show yourselves immediately, in a few moments, as children of light?

The catechesis, I say, is on one hand brief and true, but on the other, it seems burdensome to many. Do not imitate us; for we carry and parade a body that has not been destroyed with regard to sin but rather (“mallon de”) acts much. We build our whole house toward the west; as for the east, we care little, or rather (“mallon de”), we count it as nothing. We run to Satan’s pomps, intoxicating feasts, gatherings of drunkards, shameful songs, and spectacles, to the point that even women attend the theaters. Therefore, we have become the mockery of the pagans, making our very name of Christians a lie; for by clinging thus to present things, we make the hopes of the resurrection seem vain and as nothing. “What then?" someone will say. "Is our condition hopeless if we sin after baptism? Is it without remedy to the extent that you say, and do you take away all hope of salvation from us?” Not at all. Never would I be so foolish as to say that. Indeed, there is purification through repentance, but it is painful and full of many tears and sweats, as well as bodily mortification and the practice of every pure work of righteousness. That is why many have fled to the deserts and embraced the philosophical and monastic life, striving to show pure the robe that had been soiled. Yet there is hope of salvation even in the city, if we will it, through chaste marriage that avoids bestial unions and impure desires, through care for the poor and needy, and through similar works of perfection.

Indeed, that there is even after baptism the remedy of repentance and purification, the Law (“nomos”) given by Moses also makes known, and that when it prefigures the truth through sensible symbols as by a figurative representation. For he who was leprous in his body—and who by bad habit had in a way placed sin above nature—and who returned to health is not counted or mingled with the pure unless he is washed with water, anointed with oil, and purified with the blood of the victim. And this clearly proclaims the virtue of holy baptism. The Law also knows how to purify the leprosy of a garment—which would indeed seem ridiculous and a superfluous question if you held only to the symbol (“typos”). But if someone looks at the truth, as well as the beauty of the senses found in the Book, he will be amazed at this very legislation (“nomothesia”) and glorify the Lawgiver. For because we who are baptized into Christ “have put on Christ” as a garment, if we stain this beautiful robe (“stole”) with a defilement, He gives us the labors of repentance for purification—whether we have committed light sins that might still pass for a linen garment or grave sins, carnal and deadly, that would be likened to

garments made of wool, which are generally the product of dead skins. Now, (the Law) commands that if the leprosy of a garment does not go away when washed, it should be burned with fire. And the word makes known that he who after baptism has not purified himself with all his power and has not washed away the stains of sins is met by an unquenchable flame. The Law ("nomos") also purifies the leprous house, showing how great repentance must be. For if someone advances in honest and virtuous conduct to the point of obtaining the habitation of God—of whom Christ also said: "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him"—and if after this, through a careless and lax life or through pride and arrogance, he runs again after wickedness, he can, through repentance, rid himself of such leprosy, since he also has the blood of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, to aid him. For this is why, when the leprous house was purified, the legal sacrifice was also offered, thus figuratively ("typos"). I have deemed it necessary to detach and deliver these words to you, to close the pit of despair for the faithful by presenting them with sweet hopes, to make those about to receive the gift of divine baptism more circumspect and vigilant in observing themselves, and not to sell the great gift of grace for a little pleasure or to receive corruption in exchange for the garment of incorruption. And let us all save and preserve ourselves in good health in our souls and bodies by Him who wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For it is by Him, and not rather ("mallon") by us, that we are saved, because of His great mercy and love ("philanthropia"). To Him be glory forever! Amen!

## HOMILY 91 ON SAINT ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF THE GREAT CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, AND AGAINST THE LOVERS OF THE SPECTACLES OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES. TABLE OF CONTENTS

In the Law given by Moses, the God of the universe commanded that when the high priest ended his life here below and departed for the excellent inheritance and the life that is promised, the one who after him was called to the dignity of high priest should immediately, at that very moment, while the deceased was being stripped of his garments, clothe himself in his robe. That is why He also said to Moses: “Take Aaron and Eleazar, his son, and make them go up to Mount Hor in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel; strip Aaron of his robe and clothe Eleazar, his son, with it; and when Aaron is gathered, let him die there.” It was not for any other reason that He commanded this to take place, except to teach us by the very act that the one who follows and comes second to a charge must, in conduct and speech, be as if he were entirely clothing the one who came before him and joyfully weaving the same perfection, so that the priesthood may also appear to be one and that the one who exercises it may not seem to be many, but one, in that he is not marred by wickedness. This was a true praise of the one who had died before, which consisted in the fact that he would live through the works of the one who was alive and remained, and that he would be seen and shown as if by an animated and rational image.

What then shall I do, I who on the one hand celebrate the commemoration of Athanasius the Great, and on the other am naked of his high priestly robe, which is recognized by virtues? Must I, like those poor who in assemblies and festivals ask for borrowed garments and adorn themselves with the goods of others as if they were their own, clothe myself in the praises of the spiritual triumphs of this high priest and adorn myself with them in speech, presenting them in place of actions? Indeed, this would also be a profit for us, that even if we are not ashamed of anything else, at least we should be ashamed of our own words; for he who praises perfection sometimes comes late to practice it. However, for me, it is a great thing to satisfy your ears. When I have placed a vessel of small capacity and filled it with the happy successes of Athanasius, as well as with a great and immense sea, it is with Wisdom, who knows well how to mix such a drink, that I will cry out these

very expressions of divine words: “Drink the wine that I have mixed for you, leave stupidity and live, seek Wisdom to live, and through knowledge correct understanding.” This is indeed the teaching truly of wisdom, of intelligence, of the future way, and of the divine and endless life that I set before you, not to make a panegyric—for what word can also express itself as it should?—but only to present a simple narrative.

Athanasius—for it is he—the great pontiff, the shepherd, the teacher, the “agonistes”, that is, the wrestler for the truth, who possessed all these titles as one and proved himself in each of them. He was carried mystically toward the pontificate from his very swaddling clothes, while he was nourished, as by a common food, by being promoted in advance in the sacred orders. From there has come down to us also an ancient anecdote of this kind. When he was a small child in age, as children of his age played before the doors of a house, in a square, they consecrated him bishop and pontiff. For the earliest childhood loves to create suddenly, most of the time, even a king and to imitate the greatest actions, according to what comes to the movements of the spirit. And when, truly, by a childish decision, or rather by a judgment of divine Providence, which from afar gives the first impulse to the greatest things by means of very small seeds, Athanasius received the first place, he established among the children some as priests and others as deacons, and he imitated, as much as possible, the rest of the hierarchy of the Church. Now, the present day, when this was happening in a sacred manner as play and was done in a childish way—or, as I will say more truthfully, was marked in advance in a virile and divine manner—was the commemoration of Peter, the pontiff and martyr. When Alexander, who then occupied the throne of the holy Church of Alexandria, went out into the square and passed by the children’s play, after a sacred word had come to him that preoccupied him—for these childish acts of Athanasius were no joke to him—moved by God, he stopped and asked: “What is happening?” And after he had learned it and fixed his mind in a very divine manner on what was being done, he thought that this play was a symbol and received into his house, as sons, Athanasius with the young men who had been ordained. And he kept them inside the church and gave them an education of the first order, remarkable and very important, after having them meditate on the divine words night and day and exercise themselves, through other preoccupations, in a philosophical and mystical

manner, while observing each of them and preparing them in advance for their own degree, the sacred state, and the order of the ministry.

He made Athanasius apply himself and conduct himself in a special manner, fitting for priests and, as in a sanctuary, holy, while he grew in ecclesiastical sciences and went absolutely nowhere, just as the sacred Book also recounts concerning Joshua son of Nun, saying: “Joshua son of Nun, being a young minister, did not depart from the tent.” However, he was not without having tasted profane science as his age advanced; but he used it thus, to sufficiently learn the ridicule and weakness of pagan dogmas and to gather what was profitable for the understanding of divine questions, “and to have it as a servant at his service. For it is also advantageous and useful to know well the languor of adverse opinions, for the demonstration of the truth.” When he was thus instructed first in the science proper to young men and when this valiant one had received the first ordination, when he had come in good order through all the ecclesiastical hierarchy and had advanced in the sacred degrees, not in an unholy manner but in a very holy and very pure manner, he came to the primacy of the deacons and was the first of this order, while he occupied the first position because of his perfection, since it was he who adorned the very preeminence of this state, without being adorned by it himself.

Then, when the rage of Arius prevailed over religion and separated the Word of God from the essence of God and called the Creator of all creation a creature, by whose hands all things were made, and proclaimed that He who was of Him who is, is eternally begotten and arose without division, was not formerly. Constantine, the pious emperor, who, with the purple and the scepter of the empire, equally loved the kingship of the religion of Christians, which proclaims in the Trinity the unity and a single primacy of the universe, because in truth one God is understood in three hypostases, assembled in Nicaea, a city of Bithynia—which was once unknown to many, but because of this is now famous—the council of the three hundred and eighteen holy Fathers and bishops, at the head of whom was placed Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, while he had, at his right hand, also the valiant auxiliary Athanasius, who, although he stood among the deacons because of his order, since he was truly rich in the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge, as the Apostle said, had the first honors in terms of the first place of the councils, before those who had the first honors in terms of the seat.

Indeed, those who fought for orthodoxy had neither word nor intelligent invention of which Athanasius was not the principle, while he easily held back the tongues that defended the folly of Arius, refuted their controversy, was on the lookout for their sophistical tricks, and uncovered those who were hidden. For there were—some were there—those who were attached to the adverse opinion, and others who leaned toward both parties, argued sophistically against the truth, and were preoccupied with mixing wine with water and trafficking in the word of religion. But Athanasius kept it unmixed and in purity, when he barred all entry to the tricks and varied inventions of the wicked, which he himself recounted at length in what he wrote to the Africans. And from then on, it was unanimously that the holy synod truly defined and decreed that the Son Himself, who at the end of times was incarnate for our salvation and accomplished all the economy, is of the same essence as the Father, counted the Holy Spirit at once with the Father and the Son, taught to believe in Him according to the same honor, and taught and established as law for all the earth this salutary definition and this profession of faith, in which nothing is lacking and in which we are baptized, when he enclosed and limited in few words truly the meanings and expressions of the Scripture inspired by God, which are found scattered in many places.

When, after this combat, Athanasius returned to his city, he accompanied and sent to the city above, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the elder Alexander, after he had won the war against Arius by the strength of God and his own help, and was delivered from the body: he receives on the other hand as an inheritance the throne of Mark, or rather the combats and the dangers that take place for the faith and that he had to run and deliver, because the dogs of Arius, some by biting him in public and others even in secret, sharpened their teeth against him alone, as against the one who had well directed everything. On one side, they could in no way slander him to the pious emperor Constantine concerning the faith; for everything had been taken up again. On the other side, they used without proof various slanders. One of these was that “Athanasius had dared to intercept the navigation of the vessels that carried grain to the imperial city.” And why speak much? The emperor lets himself be persuaded by this: and a letter of exile was immediately written against the one who had been slandered. Indeed, when the chief of the cooks of Pharaoh also sold Joseph, while he was a good man, he knew on the one hand that the Lord God was

with Joseph, but on the other hand he admitted the slander of his wife, who had accused the patient and chaste young man of adultery. For the author of the combats of perfection gives an occasion even to adversaries, in certain times and in certain places, so that, by the alternations of prosperity and difficulty, the proclamation and triumph of the athletes, who in both situations pursue the same object, may be more remarkable, without them truly swelling and elevating themselves and without them slackening and depressing themselves uselessly. By what else, indeed, if not by this, was Paul strengthened, to succeed in each of these alternations, when he wrote: “By the weapons of righteousness, happy and unhappy, by glory and ignominy, by insult and praise”, as if the times that are opposed.

He was led into a city among those of Gaul; and he devoted himself to the philosophical life, while he was with God alone, who did not let him hide, like a remarkable and celebrated city that is placed on the mountain of virtues, and like a lamp that cannot be hidden under a bushel, but must be placed on high and illuminate with a rich light the whole house, which is the Church. Indeed, God moves the one who governed the western part of the Roman empire—this was Constantine the Younger, the pious son of Constantine of pious memory, who had the same name and the same manner as his father—and makes him bring back the athlete from exile. With God who moved him, he brought Athanasius back to the city of Alexandria, after having on the one hand threatened his brother Constantius with war, who had been caught, though incompletely, in the nets of Arian impiety, if he did not send him to the city of Alexandria, and on the other hand having written to the Alexandrians, not a letter, but a solemn and laudatory discourse on Athanasius. And when he had on the one hand successively recounted all the other facts, it is as in a summary that he says on the other hand: “It belongs to the pontiffs alone to show what it is to take pleasure in tribulation, to endure on the one hand pains and on the other to rejoice with hope, to meditate in their spirit the future glory, which hides all that is temporal and painful in this present world.” The pious Constant also did this same thing again, when he gave to the saint himself, who had gone up to Rome for similar combats, his city as well as the crown of victory.

I pass over in silence the cunning snares of the Arian synods, before which the imitator of Christ presented himself to be judged, the venality of the accusers, the witnesses who were for sale. And it was by a single word often and in few wise words that he destroyed everything, he who possessed the strength by the truth. For it was He who spoke through him, who said: "Do not think about how you will speak or what you will say; for it will be given to you in that hour what you will say." However, the folly of impiety made the wicked so enraged that they pursued even an accusation of murder, to bring it against the one who had in the same manner the love of God and the love of men and had been formed and instructed to love the Lord God and his neighbor as himself. He was accused, in fact, as the one who had killed a certain Arsenius and had cut off a hand of the dead man, to practice evil tricks and the art of sorcery, which hand the accusers held in their house, saying: "Athanasius on the one hand hid it; we on the other hand took it from him for the accusation." And this one on the one side was judged on this fact: the Lord of prodigies and miracles on the other side, who awakened the spirit of Daniel and took up the iniquitous judgment of the impudent old men concerning the chaste Susanna, descended flying, as if from the air, and made Arsenius stand by the judges of his own will, while his personal flight was sold to the accusers for gold and it was agreed by him for a great price, as one of the goods for sale, that he would not be seen absolutely anywhere, to say it in few words, until this slanderous affair was finished. And when he was present before them, when he had taken out his two hands that were hidden under his garment and had shown them to those who were assembled, these dead because of lack of faith, these dead because of slander, these thieves of the dead, who out of jealousy introduced a trial for murder, to obtain the truth about a hand that was an object of falsehood, stood mute, as if they were turned to stone, and in the end they fled.

What shall I say henceforth? For I am weary, considering the sea of his actions. Shall I enumerate the various exiles, the flights, the departures, the ascents to Rome, not only to the ancient one, but also to the new one, the great number of marches on the road and the voyages, the dangers on the sea, the rests and the dwellings in the desert? Shall I cite the emperors who threatened him with murder, namely Constance, Valens, and Julian, those on the one hand sick with the opinions of Arius and that one on the other hand with the ideas of the pagans, and all those who regarded the life of Athanasius as the destruction of their own religion? For

none of them did he become expugnable; but he was truly “Athanatos”, that is, immortal, he who fought in an immortal manner in a mortal body and by deeds. They themselves feared the reason of the combat in an apostolic manner: “It is necessary that this corruptible body put on incorruptibility and that this mortal body put on immortality”, because of which everything is bearable. And as Job, the model of constancy, was bitten and stung by pains, he said as a man: “Let me rest a little.” And as Athanasius, during the forty-six years of his episcopate, had directed the rudders among the great seas of tempests, he did not let the vessel of the orthodox faith sink.

But when he had sat on the throne for a span of six years, and not consecutively, he passed that of forty years in persecution, without saying: “Let me rest a little”, confirming on himself the sacred word, which says: “The righteous will never falter.” And when he had run at a single stretch and at the cost of hard fatigue, then he thought rather that he was sitting in spirit on the sacred seat, every time he was chased from it for the motive of religion. What will be said about his strength and his rectitude that are in the doctrine, by which he instructed and taught every Church and every nation, in addition to which he continually watered this apostolic Church, giving warnings in his letters inspired by God, bringing good understanding, uniting what was distant, chasing the wolves, launching at them the stones of dogmas with a spiritual sling, wounding like Goliath Leontius and Euzotus, these giants who were Arians and fought against God, whom he also made fall, overturned, and showed impure, that one on the one hand who, because of the lust and impurity of his life, dared to cut off his genitals and deprive himself of them, to be without fear with those he loved, and that one on the other hand who, because of the love of power, would change a seat for a seat, fed his gluttonous belly, and increased his impiety.

That is why we have also placed this solemnity with his commemoration, as a debt to the teacher and the wrestler, gathering and acquiring by it an advantage for ourselves still. For when the praise of a just man is made, a sacred word says somewhere that the peoples are in joy. Such was the rectitude of his exact dogmas, that it seemed like the plate and the inclination of a balance, and his expressions were the definition and the laws of all controversy and doubt. For, fighting against the impure opinion of Arius, like those who know very skillfully how to conduct a

fight, he gave no entry or hold to one of the other heresies, unlike Diodore and Theodore, who were not proven in the faith, who saw with one eye and were blind with the other, who cut in two the Word of God who was incarnate and who seized pretexts to fight in favor of Arius or in favor of another opinion taken among the heresies. But such was not the great Athanasius. But in giving and delivering the same word in all equal and clear, he established as law that we do not confess two natures in the one Christ after the union, but that we must say the one incarnate nature of the Word, in which he imitated with vigor both the confusion and the division of the divine incarnation. As Nestorius and the other partisans of Diodore and Theodore did not bear his accusation, they altered and changed the letter of Epictetus, of which a true disciple of Athanasius, the wise Cyril, sent the original text, as it was truly found there, to the holy Churches in the East, when he closed the mouth of those who judaized, which was ready for falsehood and inventions.  Thus, even though Athanasius has departed from here below, it is by his discourses still that he fights even now. Do you see that I have presented to you today a choice athlete, from Egypt and the city of Alexandria, which is great and loves Christ? He teaches and practices the combats of religion and not only the "pentaëthlon", that is, the set of five fights, but the one where, if it can be said, he adds to the victories of myriads of victories.

Can something like this be seen at the Olympic games? For to be entangled bodily, to be overturned and fall, to strike and be struck in turn, is the property of rams and goats, who prick and strike each other with their horns, and of donkeys, who rub and rub again each other; it is beastly and completely unreasonable. The combats that suit rational beings and Christian men are those that take place for piety, those that are waged against dishonorable passions and against the demons who inflame them, of which Athanasius was the athlete, the pedagogue, and the teacher. Make me fall the passion of fornication by a chaste thought, seize intemperance with sufficiency, pass from injustice to justice, receive the crown on the occasion of each passion, hear the sacred words that cry: "We do not have to struggle against blood and flesh." Why do you open your mouth wide for the struggle of bodies? Why do you run to Daphne and make your intelligence fly there? Why do you fight and rage for the victory of others? And why do you neglect your own falls, while you are given and delivered to the feast, to drunkenness, to jealousy, to conversations and discussions full of discord, to cries and vociferations that are

disordered and make the air resound, to brawls still and perhaps even to blows that come? It is no small thing, my brothers, that on the occasion of an amusement or one of these pleasures, we have contempt for the law of God, because nothing is with her without reward and without punishment. This prepares the kingdom of heaven, which through me, as by a first warning, Athanasius teaches today. Let us ask him to visit us also and to offer prayers for us, with the prophets, the apostles, and the martyrs, so that we may keep ourselves free from all the snares of the Calumniator, by the grace and charity of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and power, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and in the centuries of centuries. Amen!

## HOMILY 92 ON THE NINTH HOUR OF FRIDAY, WHICH IS AFTER PENTECOST. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Perhaps some of those who are turned toward their belly and, because of the passionate greed of gluttony, cannot lift the eyes of their mind toward the heavens murmur and speak against me. And when they are silently irritated due to fury, when they look at me with piercing eyes and are united at once in contradiction and dispute, they say: "Where have you found today's fast for us? Whereas before it ended around the sixth or seventh hour, you prolong it beyond the turning of the day, which becomes late and belongs to the evening, until sunset. Is it that you can cite for us, from the divine Book, a law that commands this? Or is it by your own authority that you do what comes to your mind and place upon us, as our Savior says in the Gospels, burdens heavy and difficult to bear, like those Pharisees?" For me, if it were when all were hungry and fasting that they said this, I would gladly endure their fury, while, like Paul, I would say: "And who is the one who gladdens me, if not the one who is sad because of me?" What irritates me, on the other hand, is that the greater number of my accusers launch such accusations when they are dining and satisfied, and often when they remain seated in the square or in other gatherings. To these, lest they weaken, by useless chatter, the energy of those who fast, I will respond even with great joy, and I will show what is the reason for this fast and that it is not of a single day only, but of a great number of days.

Indeed, when Our Lord, our God and our Savior Jesus Christ was at table in the house of Matthew with publicans, because of His great charity, and ate with them—for Luke writes: "Levi gave Him a great reception in his house, and there was a large crowd of publicans and others who were at table with them"—because in truth the same was called both Levi and Matthew—this jealous and proud crowd of Pharisees blamed His beneficent solicitude as a physician as something low and vile and tried to insult Him before the disciples—for it is the work of jealousy to divide those who agree—and they said: "Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners?"—for it is the mark of pride to mock and scorn condescension and what is humble and moderate. He silenced them when He said: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go, learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous,

but sinners.” And by these words, it is by the very thing they blamed that He showed them guilty of many faults.

And first, on one hand, (He blames them) as those who have a high opinion of themselves as teachers and forget that it is foreign to the state of a teacher not to lower himself with his disciples, just as it is not the mark of a physician’s profession not to bend toward the sufferings of the sick. And second, (He blames them) as those who pride themselves on knowing the Scriptures and are sick with the worst ignorance. For this is what is indicated by this (word): “Go, learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice”, as if He said: "You who think you are close to understanding the divine Scriptures, when you are very far from them, go to them and learn what this means: “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice”. Why do you place everything in legal sacrifices and reject mercy, which extends to those of the same race, and which above all pleases God?" At the same time, He indicated and signified concerning Himself that He was the one who, because of His mercy toward us, would willingly be sacrificed and abolish the weakness of the sacrifices under the Law. It is about them that David also cried out in advance, when he saw with prophetic eyes what was to come: “Show us, Lord, Your mercy, and grant us Your salvation.” Third, He strikes the proud themselves, who, with this other lack of understanding, also justified themselves and called all others sinners. And that is why it was not enough for them to say: “Why does your Master eat with publicans?” but they added: “and with sinners.” For thus the Pharisee who went up to the temple with the publican also said, praying: “God, I thank You that I am not like other men, robbers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this publican; I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.”

It is by referring the word to this same disposition of mind that our Savior says: “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”; that is: "It is not you I have come to call, you who, by your own decisions, declare yourselves righteous—for you do not wish to be—but it is those who confess that they are sinners and hasten to My call whom I have come to save. For the call is in no way necessary and forced, but awaits what is done by the will, as indeed, concerning Me, you yourselves are also called, on the sole condition that you drive far from you the presumption of righteousness that appears in you." For “all have sinned”, as Paul also says, “and are deprived of the glory of God, while they are justified

freely by His grace, through the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.” It is about such righteous men that the one who spoke through the prophet Ezekiel also said: “When I say to the righteous: You shall live, and he trusts in his righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered; he shall die in the iniquity he has committed.” Ezekiel 33:13 The presumption of righteousness is indeed a wall that blocks all paths leading to salvation and stops God, forestalling the mind itself; it caused the Pharisees also to plunge completely into the pit of perdition, without letting them approach Christ, the lamp of truth. When, after them, the disciples of John approached, they questioned Him who was at table, like a physician, with the publicans: “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?”

Do you see how the same jealousy excites and pushes what is similar toward what is similar and sharpens the cruel sting of envy? On one hand, it set the Pharisees, who gloried as teachers, against the Teacher; for this reason, they also said: “Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners?” And on the other hand, it set the disciples of John against the disciples of Christ; that is why they also said: “Why do Your disciples not fast?” But He who is truly Wisdom, and answers without harshness this question, rebukes them in secret for forgetting the teachings of John and for drawing vain glory for themselves from the name of disciples. For what does He truly say? “Can the sons of the bridal chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? Days will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast.” By the expression of John, your own teacher, about whom you have high thoughts, I answer you; recall it, and you will have the solution to your question. When he bore witness about Me, he said: “He who has the bride is the bridegroom.” John 3:29 If then I am the bridegroom and you do not make your own teacher a liar, it is known in advance that My disciples, who are the sons of the bridal chamber—for they serve Me when I accomplish the economy of the marriage feast—must be glad and joyful and not grieve or be downcast because of fasting. Now, in some respects, fasting pertains to trouble and is painful for those who do not have perfect dispositions, and for now My disciples are imperfect. And it seems that the same word also marks a greater thought. For Christ did not say: "The sons of the bridal chamber cannot fast," but: “They cannot mourn”, as if to say: "You, O disciples of John, observe a bodily fast, akin to that of the Pharisees; and that is why you also said: “Why do we and the Pharisees fast

often?" And it is to them that you have joined yourselves. By boasting of the great number of your fasts, saying: "We fast often", and by expanding this with your mouths, you have clearly shown that you are slaves of vainglory.

But I, through the joy that reigns at the time of the marriage feast, train for the perfect fast, that fast which labors and transforms the blessed affliction, about which I said in teaching: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." And the affliction that produces consolation does not weep over the emptiness of the belly; but it restrains every sensation satisfied by desires and forms all the members according to the law of God. Such are those who mourn, that they turn their very intellect toward the sole suffering in question and do not spread toward anything that can give pleasure. Because of what precedes, affliction is therefore primarily a voluntary privation that, in place of worldly pleasures, brings in return divine consolation, fills the very intellect with contemplation, and in advance shows and teaches it the blessedness that is awaited, that of the future life. The sons of the bridal chamber cannot, therefore, mourn for this fast as long as the bridegroom, who corrects their imperfection, is with them. Let us learn what the marriage feast, the bride, and the bridegroom are, and let us not pass over it lightly.

The Word of God sought and pursued our nature, which had rebelled and fled, which in truth despised and dishonored the union and familiarity it had with Him, and which subjected and enslaved the rational soul, made in God's image, under nameless desires. And He united Himself to it by the opposite (acts). For when this (nature) had broken the union of the intellect, which comes from the divine image, He approached it Himself by kinship according to the flesh, while remaining what He was, God, and without change He became man. For He received from the posterity of Abraham, and He sprang from the root of Jesse and the loins of David. The Holy Virgin, who conceived Him without seed, bore Him, and He shared in blood and flesh like us, possessing a rational soul. This alone did not suffice for Him. But it is verified that He also received (nature) for the sake of the mystical marriage, when she believed in Him after He had married her by baptism, by which He began at the Jordan—since He is the firstfruits of our race and is baptized in our place—and after He had first installed there the intellectual bed, by which we are united to Him and are henceforth called His bride and His Church.

And Paul testifies to this, writing to the Ephesians in these terms: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her, to sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the Church, because we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.” Indeed, on one hand, our kinship with Christ came to us through His incarnation; for we are the members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. On the other hand, the mystical association and union came through holy baptism; for after purifying her by the washing of water, He presented to Himself the glorious Church, when, like a bride, she shone with spiritual beauty, and after driving away by grace all filth and defilement and, to put it simply, every stain of ancient malice.

What do those who are wearied by the atheistic illusion of Eutyches say about this? Do they not hide and blush, while they fight against the luminous expressions of the sacred Books, which teach that Emmanuel, who is of the same essence as the Father according to divinity, the same also truly became of the same race and the same essence as us, when without change He united Himself hypostatically to the flesh, which possesses an intellectual soul? For He was one of two, truly of divinity and humanity, and not two after the ineffable union, just as our man is understood to be one of two, truly of soul and body. And if Christ was seen in the flesh by imagination, He did not receive from the posterity of Abraham, and He did not spring from the root of Jesse and the loins of David; He was not of the woman; He was not under the Law; we are not members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. In vain are these words assembled by the Apostles and the Prophets and the Evangelists. We are empty of all these goods, if they belong to a foreign flesh and not to ours, and if it is not through it that the Word, who became incarnate without change, conquered him who has the power of death.

But I know well that when they hear this, those who have recently mingled with the crowd of the Church are irritated; and after pushing some to this action, as indeed I have learned, they have found their joy and delight in insults against us. As for me, I will not neglect their salvation for this, because the physician also,

when the sick give him a blow with the fist or send a kick, perfects himself for a cautery or an incision in the corrupted members. Do you wish, O you, to learn more clearly that Christ is of the same race as us according to the flesh and is a bridegroom? Then listen to the bride in the Song of Songs, who in advance symbolizes the Church herself and says to (the bridegroom): “Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved, and comely.” For He is, in beauty, more comely than the sons of men, as David sings. But truly, He also answers her, calling her at once bride and sister and receiving from her the flower, the fragrance, the sweetness, and the nourishment from her labor, saying: “I have come into My garden, My sister, My bride; I have gathered My myrrh with My spice; I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey; I have drunk My wine with My milk.” Have you ever seen the same person at once truly bride and sister? But, as I have said, this on one hand belongs to kinship according to the flesh, and that on the other to the grace of baptism.

Therefore, because what was delivered mystically by Christ through baptism was a marriage, and because the need necessarily requires that the bridegroom Himself, after the marriage, stay and remain with the bride and instruct and teach her, in that He dwells with her, in what ways and by what actions she must conduct herself, it is with the disciples, who were in the condition of the Church and the bride, that as man He lived and dwelt among men—and this, though at the same time He was also God—showing them every path of the excellent life, by which they were to form and represent according to the manner of the bridegroom those who at all times become brides through divine baptism. Therefore, the whole time of the Incarnation was the tradition, meditation, and direction of these mystical nuptials, that is, of the bridal bed, of the union and marriage; and the disciples were the servants, that is, the companions, and the sons of the bridal chamber, just as also the servants, that is, the laborers, of the harvest. For the divine Book is accustomed to naming "sons of such an action" those who serve for something or who cultivate, that is, do something, like "sons of peace" and on the contrary "sons of disobedience," and "sons of strength" the armies and phalanxes of those who are armed. It is therefore what Christ says: “Can the sons of the bridal chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? Days will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast.” When was the bridegroom taken and removed from them? It is certain that it was when He ascended into heaven and the

Paraclete descended, (He who is) the teacher of the perfect fast and who leads and guides us toward all that is perfect. “He will guide you into all truth”, said Christ to His disciples. This removal of the bridegroom, the prophet David also sings, saying: “O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is Your name in all the earth, for Your majesty has been exalted above the heavens.”

Today, therefore, is the commemoration of the fasts that take place after Christ was taken and removed, days that are not determined in number. For it is in an indeterminate manner that our Savior said: “Days will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast.” We, however, because of our negligence, fulfill the law even hypocritically by the commemoration of a single day; we show ourselves strict about the hours of this (fast), we watch the sky, we dream of sunset, and our palate is wide open toward it. But these are not truly Christians. For I know that many observe these (fasts) exactly even in the cities, especially chaste women, some of whom fast every day, and many others on Wednesday and Friday, (they) whom even the most negligent husbands push and incite to break (the fast). But those who hold the place of the head are conquered by those who on one hand are women, but on the other are strong souls, and they double their reward, so that they will be crowned—and this after having fasted and at the same time conquered by the power of Christ, who said: “My power is made perfect in weakness”, and who accomplishes this by the very facts. To Him be glory forever! Amen!

## HOMILY 93 THIS HOMILY WAS PRONOUNCED WHEN THE SYNODICAL LETTERS OF THE PIOUS DIOSCORUS, ARCHBISHOP OF THE (CITY) OF ALEXANDRIA, WERE TO BE READ. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Now is the time to sing and cry out, with a spirit that is deeply grounded and knows how to sing in a spiritual manner and feel divine (things), these words of the prophet David: “Who will proclaim the mighty deeds of the Lord (and) make all His praises heard”? It is truly, indeed, the work of the Lord’s power that the Egyptians come to us, that we ourselves go to the Egyptians, and that we unite with them through the bond of faith, which Nestorius and his impure band had broken when they rose up, with many followers, against the holy Churches. They fought in vain against the twelve chapters of Cyril, wise in divine (matters), and against his other teachings, and they divided our one Lord and God Jesus Christ into two, defining Him as two natures after the ineffable union, and consequently separating the operations and properties of these. But now, from here to there and from there to here, the law passes and repasses, which requires us to confess one single nature of Emmanuel, truly the same God and man, beyond change and imagination, and not two natures, but truly the one nature and hypostasis of God the Word, which became incarnate and was made perfectly man. For that which is united without confusion from two—I mean from humanity and divinity, which are perfect according to their own particular notion—how could it be called two without breaking the very union? Therefore, Christ is also one from two without division; and because the elements from which this union arises are not confused, He also shows, in an unmistakable manner, that the same is, on the one hand, of the same essence (oucia) as the Father according to divinity, and on the other hand, of the same essence as we men according to humanity. For it is by remaining what He is that He became man without change.

It is in this that Dioscorus approves of us today, he who has inherited the evangelical seat of the divine Mark by virtue of a decree from above; (he is) a man who, before we even consider the hair on his head, is an elder in prudence. He was raised, on the one hand, in the labors of the ascetic life and made it the law of his youth, and on the other hand, he lived in sacred functions, advanced through ecclesiastical ranks to the episcopate, ascended the throne which is by far the

highest and is the head of the sacred seats in Egypt, and received the spiritual staff of the dignity of sovereign pastor. As for his dogmas (δέγμετες) and doctrines, it is superfluous to speak of them. For these are things that belong uniquely to the great and Christ-loving city of Alexandria and to its pastors. And this descends, like a paternal inheritance, also to those who come after and never presents any interruption; for among them, it is as natural to believe soundly as to breathe air. This is what the prophet Isaiah proclaimed in advance with a loud voice (μεγαφωνία), saying: “On that day, there will be an altar to the Lord in the land of the Egyptians, and a pillar to the Lord near its border, and it will be a sign forever to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt”. For it is truly fitting to call "altar" that (altar) on which the orthodox faith sacrifices the victim; and this same faith of the Egyptians, the prophet aptly named "pillar," because it is as if engraved and traced on a pillar of bronze in their hearts and is in no way diminished or erased.

For this reason, therefore, the altar of the Egyptians is the altar of the Lord, because their faith is also not variable over time but is written as if on a pillar. And why did he add: “And (there will be) a pillar to the Lord near its border”? (It is) to show, on the one hand, by the pillar—as I have said—the fixity and immobility of the (Egyptians') faith, and on the other hand, by the words “near its border”, the harmony that extends throughout the land of the Egyptians, reaching even to its borders and ending there, as if limited by them and as if this definite and very particular mark belonged to the Egyptians alone. The prophet’s word also shows the enduring and endless character of such an excellent possession, which he also called a "sign," saying: “And it will be a sign forever to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt”. He also foretells their union and association with us, which we now see fulfilled. For he said: “On that day, there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria; the Assyrians will enter Egypt, and the Egyptians will go to Assyria; and the Egyptians will serve the Assyrians”. He calls us in part Assyrians, all of us who are placed toward the sunrise and the East. But neither will the Egyptians go to the Assyrians, nor the Assyrians to the Egyptians, even though it is among the nations that are thus idolatrous that the Church grows, by the power of Christ who can do all things. Now, we who are faithful go to the faithful. And when we boast of one city, the metropolis above, the heavenly Jerusalem, and when we gird ourselves with the bond of good understanding, let us embrace one another freely, spiritually, and masterfully, obeying the apostolic law, which says: “Submitting to one another

in the fear of Christ". For to know how to serve thus for the salvation of the brothers is the affair of men who are truly great, as well as of men who are raised in perfection and pursue the imitation of Christ. Such was Paul, who wrote to the Corinthians: "For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more". Our Savior also said this in the Gospels (Égaryfôx): "Whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many". It is in this way that Isaiah also prophesied that the Egyptians will serve the Assyrians, when, by every word conforming to the law, orthodoxy, and the Law, they give us full assurance and approve us, when they think and say the same things (as we), and when they fight for the same hope. Now, therefore, having been prepared in advance by these measured and few words, receiving into the ears of your heart, with all praise (zàéc), the unaltered dogmas (δάγματα) from the pillar of the Egyptians, glorify with us the Father, the Son—who is Christ and became incarnate for us—and the Holy Spirit, because in truth the Trinity is Trinity, even though this one of the Trinity, the Word from the Father, became incarnate, without sin, in the flesh, which is from us and possessed a rational soul; for He remained, even so, one Son, while being glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as before the ages, so now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 94 TO THOSE WHO HAD DOUBTS UPON READING THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, CONCERNING THE GENEALOGY AND THE GENERATION ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, OUR GOD AND OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. TABLE OF CONTENTS

When, this past Sunday, the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew was read to you, not in its time on one hand—for you know that the feast of the divine Epiphany and the birth according to the flesh of our Savior is distant—yet it was read on the other hand—because everything is equally reserved and placed for the appropriate time, and the readings that are suitable are also adapted and prepared for the feasts and other occasions by the Fathers and those who governed the Churches—some among those who heard, when they came to me, said afterward: "What profit is there in hearing: Such a one begot such a one, and such a one begot...that we tire our ears with the great number of all these names and that we move our fingers to count the persons, without receiving any spiritual profit within ourselves?" Some on the other side listened and examined very well and very subtly, they had doubts about different (points), even though they were instructed, and they addressed their questions to me regarding these (doubts) as (objections) that have force. Because in truth I responded to them, according to the measure of strength that my smallness possesses, I thought it fitting that what was said in private, I present it for the common good, that is, the public, before all of you, so that you may hear it, with very careful implementation and examination. It is necessary, therefore, to know clearly that the Evangelists, or rather the Spirit who spoke in them, had the intention and made sure that people would come to Christ through what was written and that no one would doubt about Him, neither that He was God by nature nor that according to the economy the same was truly man, without any change, mutation, or illusion. This is why, on one hand, he said: In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; and: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

He has truly taken upon Himself the kinship of this nature, of this (nature) which has fornicated, to purify it, of this (nature) which has been sick, to heal it, of this (nature) which has fallen, to raise it up. And it is truly in a condescending and charitable manner, also considering a manner befitting God, that He united

Himself, in fact, to the flesh which is of the same essence as us (and) which possesses an intelligent soul, without sin, while the virginity, the conception, and the gestation that (come) from the Holy Spirit intervened, the birth which has not known marriage and carnal union and has preserved in an ineffable manner the seal of virginal purity. On one hand, the Evangelist ridicules and exposes the passions of our race, (its) dishonors and (its) diseases, to which the Word of God descended because of His mercy, to glorify above all His charity and His elevation at the same time—for this causes absolutely no harm to the physician, (namely) that He lowers Himself with those who are sick—and, when it was necessary to say: "David begot Solomon from Bathsheba"—for this was indeed the name of the woman herself—in ridiculing, so to speak, the adultery itself, he clearly exclaimed: (David begot Solomon) from the wife of Uriah, showing that Christ, who by generation descends from such a race, has taken our weaknesses and carried our diseases, as one of the prophets said somewhere. On the other hand, those whose thoughts are for the atheistic Manichean illusion of Eutyches and for the lack of intelligence of Apollinaris blush at the incarnation and the perfect inhumanation, being ashamed, it seems, of our true salvation, and they believe " that sin stains our Savior: and this, although it is outside of sin that He descended and took the form of a servant and became man to destroy the power of sin. For of necessity, where there is God, sin is far away; and when it is far away, what is capable of staining and defiling? For there is no other filth except the stain of sin.

This is why those who were themselves eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word have freely preached the genealogy of Jesus according to the flesh, hiding nothing of what seems dishonorable, and instructing us and teaching us at the same time not to turn our gaze downward and not to blush because our first fathers were despicable, and no more, because they were worthy of praise, to elevate ourselves on the contrary and to say: "My grandfather was a martyr; and my father held the first position in the sacred (functions) and among the bishops; and my mother devoted herself to the ascetic life and was completely Christian." It will be said, indeed, and very justly, to him who is such: "Show me, O excellent one, that you yourself walk in the footsteps of your first fathers, and I will have much veneration for you, who have not betrayed the perfection of your fathers and the religion of the race. But if you turn to the opposite path, I wonder, outside of (your) lack of intelligence and (your) great stupidity, that you forget that you bring against

yourself the religion of those who begot you, not so that you may be praised, but so that you may be reproached for not having envied this good domestic example." This is why, to the Jews also who raised their heads and, in addition to much pride, said boastfully: We are the offspring of Abraham, Christ responded: If you were children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham. And even before Him, John the Baptist, cutting short this high opinion, said: And do not imagine saying among yourselves: We have Abraham as our father. But just as, for the Jews, the perfection " of their first fathers was of no profit when they did not receive the Gospel (Εὐχγγᾶλιον), so also, for those who believed among the nations, ancestral idolatry (διστᾶχυρούς) caused no harm when they ran to Christ, or rather (αἰλλον δέ) it also showed that they were very well tested and made them children of Abraham, so that Paul also, addressing even the Jews, says: You know then that those who (are so) by faith, these are the children of Abraham. We must therefore trust in our own good works and not clothe ourselves with the virtues of others, while we are naked of all good. For what makes us of the same race as religious men is the resemblance of the manner (of living), and not the community of blood.

"But," they say, "why did (Matthew) say: Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham, when Abraham should have been in the first place, as the older in time? What then is the reason (for this)?" A great honor prevailed among the Jews for the prophet David, as for the one who first, so to speak, reigned over Jerusalem, (who) is a pious man and who received the promise that it would be from his offspring that Christ would arise, because in the psalms also it was sung: For the sake of David, your servant, do not turn away the face of your Christ; and: The Lord swore to David the truth, and He will not deny him (His oath), (namely) that it is (one of the fruits of your womb that I will place on your throne). And there were many other (words) similar to these that had been spoken by various prophets, to the point that, even after the death of David, they designated in advance by his own name the one who was to come, the one who is the Christ, such as the (word) of Ezekiel: And I will establish over them one shepherd, who will pasture them, David, my servant; he will pasture them, he will give them rest, and he will be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be God to them, and my servant David (will be) prince in their midst. Such is also what was said by Jeremiah by way of prophecy: Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, and I will raise up for David a righteous shoot; he will reign as a righteous king, he will show himself wise, and he will

exercise judgment and righteousness on the earth. And one could count a great number of (words) that resemble these and that are very clear, because among the Jews, the (opinion) prevailed firmly that it would be from the offspring of David that Christ would come. This is why the Evangelist John also wrote that these (words) were spoken and exchanged by the Jews, while they did not believe and were blind to the light of the truth: Is it from Galilee that the Christ comes? Has not the Scripture said that it is from the offspring of David and from the village of Bethlehem, where David was, that the Christ comes? In truth, indeed, the same promise had also been made, before David, to Abraham—for it had also been said to him: In your offspring all the nations will be blessed—yet not in a manner as clear or with as many (words). It is therefore because of these (words) that were more numerous and more recent that a preconceived opinion prevailed, in view of which the Evangelist, conforming to it in his thought, began with David, while, by what is confessed and sung by all, the world, he wanted to seize the listener, to obtain his approval without discussion, to elevate (and) raise him thus up to Abraham, and by what is evident, to confirm equally what was ancient and hidden quietly in any way.

It is, indeed, to the Hebrews first also, it is said, that, in their language, Matthew gave his Gospel, while, because of the truth also, not only those who wrote the Gospel, but also those who announced and preached it, intended to elevate and raise up to the divine Books those who heard them and to confirm their word by what had been written and said in advance by way of prophecy concerning Christ. This is why, indeed, when Matthew had counted the families in every way separately and each man separately, summarizing again in a general and collective manner, as in a summary, he wrote: From Abraham to David fourteen families, and from David to the exile of Babylon fourteen families, and from the exile of Babylon to Christ fourteen families, so that, by dividing the families into double sevens—for the number 14 is a double seven—he might mention by the very words of the prophet Daniel, who divides the times themselves into sevens of years, in a manner difficult to understand and as only he who made the revelation and had the vision knows, and who predicts the coming of Christ and all that must (happen), and (so that) he might show, by the kinship and similarity of the words, that the one he announces himself to those who hear (him) is not another Christ than that one, (namely) the one whom the prophets themselves predicted.

"But," they say, "how, when it is from the Mother of God, the Virgin, that our Savior Christ was born, do these Evangelists count Joseph in the families, forgetting rather the admirable birth and the mother who is not married and showing, even unwillingly, that Jesus himself was born from the carnal commerce of marriage?" This, indeed, the pagans can be heard saying, when they mock and ridicule the great mystery itself. For my part, I have also heard one of those whose thoughts are for the imagination, (who) was drunk and stupid from the (opinions) of Eutyches and who wandered and strayed in error, say: "It is for this that the Virgin is not counted in the families, but Joseph (is counted), it is to show by this that this race is not proper or does not suit our Savior Christ at all. It is said on one hand that He descends by generation from Abraham and David, and on the other hand that it is not (so). And it is uselessly, to speak simply, and according to the illusion that those who wrote have babbled and rambled." Illusion, indeed, it seems, is for them also the truth of the sacred Books. I pass over in silence the blasphemies of the followers of Nestorius, who on one hand oppose those and rival with an opposite zeal, (and who) on the other hand come to the impure babbling of the pagans, because in truth, I myself have also heard them, when many times I have been in conflict with them, while they were unrestrainedly engaged. They want Christ to pass for being born also from the union of man and woman, so that they may bring Him to mere humanity only and show Him a man clothed with God, and not God who is by nature, who for us became man without change and according to the economy at the same time and truly.

But, saying to those: "Farewell!" and rejecting their vain words, which are unintelligible—for the fool will say foolish things and his heart will think vain things, says the word of a prophet—we will say what (pertains to) the truth. The divine Book is accustomed “ to make genealogies, not by the women, but by the men, and to make them descend by generation from the fathers to the male children, and not to establish the count of the races by the women and the mothers nor to refer to the women, as if the women could pass for being counted in the first place in the families. For it is in the last place, following and accompanying sometimes, that they too are counted in the families at the same time as the men; for example, when Moses and Aaron were counted in the families, Mary, their sister, was also counted at the same time as them. It is therefore to follow the usage

of the Book that the Evangelist made the account of the generation of the race descend to Joseph, and not to the Virgin. "And," you will say, "how then will the genealogy suit Christ, who did not exist through Joseph? For, either you will consequently grant that He is the son of Joseph; or, if that is not so, He will necessarily be foreign to this genealogy." But the reasoning is evident for those who are versed and learned in the Scriptures inspired by God. There was, indeed, a commandment of the Law, which was given by Moses and found in the book of Numbers, which ordered that it would not be permitted to anyone, when he is from another tribe, to marry a woman for the marriage of another tribe, but necessarily from the same (tribe), so that the inheritance of the land, which had fallen to each tribe, would not pass also to another tribe on the occasion of marriages. The words of the divine commandment are thus: The children of Israel shall cleave each to the inheritance of the tribe of his father. And every daughter who exercises, as a close relative, a right over an inheritance in the tribes of the children of Israel shall be the wife of one of those who (are part) of the families (of the tribe) of her father, so that the children of Israel exercise, as close relatives, a right each on his inheritance and that the inheritance does not return from one tribe to another tribe. But the tribes of the children of Israel shall cleave to their inheritance, each in his tribe.

It is because of this law that Joseph also, while he was an observer of the commandments of God—for this is what the Evangelist also indicated, when he said: He was a just man—and that he descended by generation from the tribe of Judah and from the house and family of David, as it is written, married the Virgin from the same tribe and the same race, so that in truth his own genealogy was the genealogy of Mary, from whom without seed Christ was born, so that the usage of the Book was also preserved, which does not count the women in writing, and that by this the truth was not wounded in anything. (And) that the Virgin herself was of the same family and the same race as Joseph, (this) has been clearly shown, especially on one hand by what was said; and it is also in other terms that the sacred Book says this same thing. Luke, indeed, wrote: Gabriel was sent from God to a Virgin betrothed to a man, whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. This is why also the angel, who announced, said: And you will bear a son, and you will call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of David, his father. And again: And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, into Judea, into

the city of David, which is truly called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, so that he might be enrolled with Mary, the woman who was betrothed to him, who was pregnant. And he did not say: "He went up with Mary," so that it would not seem that it was because of the same domicile that she went up with him; but he said: So that he might be enrolled with Mary. (And) he would not be (the object) of one and the same enrollment, if he were not also of the same equality of race and (the same) house and (the same) city. (And) the Book is accustomed to call "family" the equality of race. Each tribe also, indeed, was still divided into families and equalities of races (gazyésus), as is known from the book of Numbers. For it is written in these terms: And these were the children of Huber, the firstborn of Iswatt, according to their equalities of races, according to their families, according to the houses of their fathers, according to the number of their names, according to their tribes. And Joshua, the son of Nun, also wrote in these terms: All of you shall gather in the morning according to your tribes; and behold, the tribe that the Lord will show, it shall be presented by families; and the family that the Lord will show, it shall be presented by houses; and the house that the Lord will show, it shall be presented by men.

But someone will say: "This very thing troubles me, (namely) that I hear: The man of Mary, and again: Mary, your wife. For these names indicate marriage and carnal union." But here again we will bring for answer the divine Book, which is accustomed to call "man" the betrothed and in the same way "wife" the betrothed. This, indeed, is written in Deuteronomy (Δυτεροφάριος): And if there is a young virgin girl who is betrothed to a man and a man who has found her in a city lies with her, bring them both out to the gate of that city; and let them both be stoned and die, this young girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and this man, because he has humiliated the wife of his neighbor. See how he said that this young virgin girl is betrothed, not to a betrothed, but to a man, and (how) he ordered that the one who has dishonored her be stoned, because he has humiliated, he says, the wife of his neighbor. And (this), although she had not come at the same time as him to marriage—for she was betrothed—but it is the custom to call "wife" the betrothed and "man" the betrothed. However, it is not outside the Holy Spirit that the Evangelist (Εὐαγγελιστές) has named here both Joseph "man" and also Mary "his wife": and (this), although he says the names that are customary in the Book and although he treats the facts themselves intentionally. This very thing, indeed,

was arranged by Him who became man for our salvation, (namely) that the admirable character of (His) birth be hidden. This is why, it is not immediately after the beginning of the betrothal that the conception which (comes) from the Holy Spirit took place—and otherwise, it was of necessity that the fact would be evident and known—but it is afterward, at the very time of the nuptial bed. This is why, indeed, he said: Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit; as if to say: "Little would it have taken for them not to have even come together, if the miracle had not preceded carnal commerce." And in this way Joseph became, not a husband, but the minister of the economy and of the ineffable mysteries, and he heard: Do not fear to take Mary (as) your wife; for what is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; so that, when a great part of the time of gestation had passed with him, what would be born might pass for being (the result) of carnal union, and not of the Holy Spirit. This is why, she too was called his wife and he too, (he was called) her man. And otherwise, he was not with her in terms of the union of marriage. For how would he dare this after the divine conception? I do not say: When he was just; but, even if he were someone very impious and very iniquitous, (I say): When he was stopped and troubled because of (great) fear and great dread, to imagine only (this), very far indeed also from doing it. Luke testified to this, (he) who wrote clearly: With Mary, who is betrothed to him, who is pregnant. And how was the one who is pregnant betrothed? Because it is not from him that (is) the conception, but from the Holy Spirit. (And) the same Evangelist also wrote: And Jesus was about thirty years of age, and He was, as was supposed, the son of Joseph. But, however, there was a need for this very thing to appear (so). For if, from the beginning, the Jews, who were murderers with regard to all religious blood, had known the virginity and the conception which (is) of the Holy Spirit, of necessity they would have killed the Virgin herself and they would have done much evil. And of this there is a present example, because it is by the miracles that, like those who fought against God, they were particularly pushed and excited to the impure murder. They imagined, indeed, to kill Lazarus, because in truth they had seen with astonishment that he was resurrected from the dead by Jesus. And John the Theologian says this in these terms: (And) the chief priests themselves imagined to kill also Lazarus himself, because many among the Jews were going away because of him and believed in Jesus himself. And we find that the Mother of God herself, the Virgin, was disposed in her spirit and acted (thus) in terms of the economy; and this, although she knew more than all men, as far as

possible, the great mystery that had been accomplished in her. And she said to Jesus, when He was very young according to the flesh: My son, why have you acted with us in this way? Behold, your father and I, while we were in anguish, were seeking you. Do not be astonished, therefore, hearing: Joseph, the man of the Virgin, after you have learned the depth of the economy. For there was a purpose, that the virginity and the admirable character of the birth be hidden, not only from the Jews, but also from the Slanderer, their father, who on one hand is jealous of our salvation and who on the other hand ignored the reality of these (facts) and that they were the seeds of salvation of the whole world. Ignatius, clothed with God, when he sent (a letter) to the Ephesians, also wrote this, in these terms: "The virginity of Mary was hidden from the prince (ἐ῾γων) of this world, and her childbearing also, and in the same way the death of the Lord also (these are) three shining mysteries, which in truth were accomplished in the silence of God."

Have you considered, hearing these (words), how I was entangled by the grips of the adversaries, which seemed inevitable? Can one see something similar concerning the dust of the Olympic games? Did I fear to mix with those who engage in the fight? Did I, when once I placed (my) hands in front of (their) hands, kick the opposing fighter outside the law (νάμος) of athletics? Did I, when engaging in the fight, try to come outside the posts placed in a circle? Did an external sophistry of forced and supplicant fighters reach me and did it break and annihilate the assaults of the struggles of the objections? Did some agitation or dust or trouble arise from there? Did I not receive all this quietly and peacefully and did I not bring solutions according to the Law and with the help of the Books of the Spirit? These kinds of exercises also are truly a fight, which involves on one part enigmas and objections from the pagans, from the Jews, and from the heretics—when the Slanderer and the demons produce in them the bile and the persuasion of controversy—(and) which involves on the other part a Solution, not by skill, but by an Operation that (comes) from above and a gift and by the wealth of simple truth, which, because of the abundance of proofs, does not need ruse and variety. On this subject also Paul will say: We do not have a fight against blood and flesh, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the princes of the world of darkness of this age, against the wicked spirits. Christ sees this fight, (as well as) the angels, the archangels, all the armies of the heavens and the spirits of the just and of those who have conducted themselves holily. All on one hand look upward

and to the heights, (and) not a single one on the other part (looks) toward the earth, neither the author of the fight, nor those who see the fight, nor the one who directs it. Indeed, in this sensible fight on one part of those who exercise according to the body, even the oil with which we see those who fight anointed leads them to a vision of presence in a manner full of sweat and dust and labor. The reasons (for being) in the olive tree and in the earth; that is why those who engage in the fight also rub each other with dust, so that the grips of their hands do not fail. As for the intellectual fight and ours on the other hand, the anointing is spiritual and heavenly, I mean that of adoption, by which we cast far from us all that is earthly, without letting the Slanderer himself rub us with it, while we know his very thoughts, and keeping the same shining anointing, resplendent and sparkling, while it blinds his eyes and (those) of the demons. If we received the least thing from the earth, it is full of confidence that he would throw himself and rush upon us, would necessarily defeat us and precipitate us into a fall that would be more unhappy than all. From there (it follows) that John also wrote: The anointing that you have received from him will remain in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as his anointing teaches you concerning all things! Come therefore to my arena, and despise that " which is awaited with rage, that of Daphne. Be for me lovers of spectacles of spiritual fights, and I will prepare for you still other enigmas difficult to solve. Come, I will prepare for you with abundance and magnanimity a theater, like one who fights for the crown and for the proclamation, and I will show you how you must also fight, so that, according to the word of Paul, "the peace of Christ may intervene", that the one by whom we were also called (us) may lead and pronounce in our hearts the decision concerning the crown of victory, and that we may obtain the kingdom of heaven by the grace and charity of Our Lord, our God and our Savior Jesus-Christ, with whom glory befits the Father with the Holy Spirit, now and always and in the ages of ages. Amen!

**HOMILY 95 ON THE DIVISION AND APPARENT DISAGREEMENT OF MATTHEW AND LUKE REGARDING THE GENEALOGY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, OUR GOD, AND OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. AND, AT THE END, AGAINST THOSE WHO ASCENDED TO DAPHNE IN A PAGAN MANNER.** TABLE OF CONTENTS

I recall that previously, when I delivered the homily concerning the genealogy according to the flesh of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, and showed why and how the same one descends from the lineage of men and also rises above all lineage, transcends time, and subdues all thoughts concerning the ages, while being equal in eternity to the Father and being God from God; and why the Evangelists can be heard saying: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God"; and: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." And for what reason He was first called the son of David, and then the son of Abraham, who was older in time and for this reason had to be named first; and what is the reason that Joseph was counted among the families, while the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, conceived and bore Christ without seed and by the Holy Spirit, and it was fitting for the Evangelist to count her among the families as appropriate; and how, when the marital union had not taken place, he is called her husband on one side, and she is called his wife on the other; and all these contradictions and similar ones, which were considered strong and unavoidable by Jews, pagans, and heretics, were carefully discussed by me in a clear and non-violent manner—(I recall, I say, that previously) I saw you, on the one hand, at the presentation of these doubts, standing on the edge of your seats as if watching a wrestling match, and on the other hand, at the solutions, leaping with joy, praising and rejoicing, as if some opposing wrestler had been defeated and fallen.

Therefore, I also came to promise you that if you did not ascend to Daphne, I would prepare for you other struggles and objections, which are regarded as difficult but are not—for how could there be anything difficult where there is God and truth?—and I would present to you a spectacle closely related to the same subject. And some, on the one hand, paid attention to my promise and this spiritual arena, followed and kept the agreements, and did not ascend to this harmful pleasure. Many, on the other hand, overcome by shameful desire, like fugitives from perfection, turned away and presented their backs as they departed, as the

prophet Zechariah says. But it is not because of these that I will stop, close my mouth, repay injustice with silence, and lie to the promise. But it is because of those who persevered in what they had approved, even if they were very few, even if by chance one or two in number, that I will joyfully repay the debt. And even if there were no one who obeyed and was without fault, even so I would be obliged to speak. Therefore, indeed, I think that our Lord also said in the Gospels: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Showing that we must cast the word of teaching like a seed equally on all who hear similarly, without seeking after discussion who has sensitive ears; for the word itself will find him when it has been received invisibly in the depths of his heart.

We must begin with the questions themselves. "How," they say, "does Matthew, on the one hand, counting the families, make the account descend from the first fathers to the children, beginning with Abraham and descending to Joseph, the betrothed of the Mother of God, Mary? How does Luke, on the other hand, walking toward the source of the rivers, as they say in truth, and reversing the current in the opposite direction, begin with Joseph and count the fathers backward, and say concerning our Savior Jesus: 'He was, as it seemed, the son of Joseph, the son of Heli,' and ascend on a ladder leading upward until he reaches Adam?" To this, we indeed say that we find that the Evangelists themselves did nothing strange or unknown to the divine Book. For it is its custom to make the numbering of lineages descend from above and also to make it ascend from below. And this is written clearly and many times in the book of Chronicles. For on the one hand, it makes it descend, as where it says: "These are the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, Bukki his son, Uzzi his son." And on the other hand, it makes it ascend, as it also says: "The singer Heman, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah, the son of Zuph." And by reading carefully, one finds that many lineages of this kind are composed differently in their account, sometimes in this way and sometimes in that way. "How then," they say, "do we see Luke himself mentioning in the genealogy other persons besides those cited by Matthew, and not only others but also many more in number than those? For Joseph, the betrothed of the Mother of God, the Virgin—Matthew says he is the son of a certain Jacob, while Luke says he is the son of Heli."

But even in this, those who are not initiated and are not instructed and are troubled because of it, the truth of the sacred Books will bring them to faith. For it is not one genealogy that the divine Evangelists intended to establish; and this, although only one was counted among the families—for this is the wonder. But Matthew recounts the natural genealogy, and Luke the legal one. And what is this? If God permits, I will say it clearly. In the Law of Moses, it was commanded that no one else should take the wife of one who died childless for the sake of carnal union, except the brother of her husband, and that the one born from this would be called the son of the deceased. It is good that we also hear the divine words themselves, which are found in Deuteronomy and express this: "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no offspring, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel." And if the one who died childless had no brother, another among his close relatives according to the lineage would take his wife to raise up offspring for him. For it was to the deceased, as you have now heard, that this son was assigned according to the Law; and this kind of marriage was called "kinship of lineage." And if the closest relative did not wish to take the wife of the deceased as was fitting, then the next closest relative according to the lineage would necessarily accept the marriage. For the Law itself took care to raise up offspring for the one who had no children and died.

This is written clearly in Ruth, and this book is also part of the divine Scriptures. For a certain Boaz, who wanted to take Ruth, who had been the wife of a certain Mahlon, his relative who died childless, said to the one who was the closest relative before him according to the lineage of the deceased: "If you are the closest relative according to the lineage, be the closest relative; and if you are not the closest relative according to the lineage, tell me, and I will know; for there is no one closer than you, and I am after you." And when he did not wish to do so and said to him: "Come near and claim for yourself my kinship, because I cannot," Boaz said again: "Then Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to raise up the name of the deceased from among his brothers and from his tribe." When these prescriptions were thus known and explained, it is known to all that the procreation of children from such marriages is like the resurrection of

the deceased. For the Scripture inspired by God says clearly: "To raise up the name of the deceased in his inheritance." And it is of necessity that the one who is born is assigned on the one hand according to nature as the father of the second husband of the woman, from whose carnal union he was born, and on the other hand according to the Law is considered the son of the deceased. In this way, concerning Joseph, who married the Holy Virgin, it is true that two fathers must be assigned to him.

For when Heli took a wife and died childless, Jacob, who was his close relative according to the lineage, took his wife for carnal union, to raise up offspring for the deceased, as the Law commanded. When Joseph was born from him, he was the legal son of Heli on the one hand, and the natural son of Jacob on the other. And for this reason, Matthew said that Joseph is the son of Jacob, and Luke said he is the son of Heli. For the former attributed to nature, and the latter to the Law, the equality of lineage, which is divided between different persons on both sides. And Matthew mentioned the natural fathers of Joseph, while Luke mentioned the legal ones, when he mentioned Heli, who according to the Law was the father of Joseph, and then advanced upward to Nathan, who was also the son of David, to show the legal kinship that ascends to Christ through David. For by numbering the natural kinship through those who descend from Solomon, Matthew showed that Christ is the son of David according to the flesh. That both Solomon and Nathan are sons of David, not only of one father but also of one mother, is also shown by the first book of Chronicles. For the sacred Book expresses this: "And David reigned in Hebron seven years and six months, and thirty-three years he reigned in Jerusalem. And these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon, all four from Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam." She was the wife of Uriah, with whom David united carnally in adultery. And I have not mentioned this purely and simply or haphazardly, but because of those who thought that Nathan was born to David from another marriage, a pure one, and that Luke took care not to mention any of those born from marriages outside the Law—which is not true. For he also mentioned Pharez, who was born from Judah's unlawful carnal union with his daughter-in-law, by which it is especially shown clearly that Christ came to correct the diseases of our nature.

But when Luke took care, as I have truly said, to establish the legal kinship through other persons up to David, beginning from below, he counts a numbering of the

lineage where some persons truly existed on the one hand, and some on the other hand bore the same names as those counted by Matthew. For in the same people, it is not one but many who, if it happens, are called Judah, Levi, and Simon, just as now there are Pauls, Johns, and Peters. And often Luke also mentioned the same person at the same time as Matthew, even though he composed a different lineage account, I mean the legal one. For like rivers that divide differently, flow together again, and separate again from one another, lineages are accustomed to openly mix through certain persons, even after being dispersed far and divided. For behold, both Evangelists mentioned Shealtiel. But Matthew called him, according to nature, the son of Jeconiah, and Luke, according to the Law, called him the son of Neri, when there was a lack of children of the deceased and a second carnal union, according to the manner we described above. But both also mentioned Zerubbabel, of whom Matthew said he is the father of Abiud, and Luke said he is the father of Rhesa. And just as from David there were two persons, the two sons Solomon and Nathan, and through them the lineage was divided, and in Joseph, the betrothed of the Mother of God according to the economy, it came through natural and legal kinship at the same time to the same kinship and in a way converged and mixed, so also when the lineage separated from Abiud and Rhesa, the sons of Zerubbabel, it concurred in Joseph in the same way. And it is not surprising if, according to Matthew on the one hand, forty-two persons were counted from Abraham to Joseph, and according to Luke on the other hand, about fifty-five. For since there were different lineages, it is not outside of what is fitting that one has many births and the other has few slow births. Nearby, one can see the houses of two brothers, if it happens, one on the one hand, who is older in time and took a wife long ago, and the other on the other hand, who is younger in age and until the end participated in marriage. One can see on the one hand that the house of the younger has grown and risen already to three generations, abounding in many births and frequently circulating the name of "grandfather," and on the other hand that the house of the elder barely names a father, sometimes late and at the gates of old age, one who lacks the procreation of children. What is surprising, then, if in the course of five hundred years, so to speak, and in the cycle of all these ages from David to Joseph, one of the lineages, which Luke counted according to the Law, multiplied and grew by the rapidity of births to ten families or more, while the other advanced more sluggishly because of slow births in time?

"And," they will say, "how is it known that Luke mentioned the legal genealogy and that, like Matthew, he did not rather mention the entire natural genealogy?" I will prove this promptly by the facts themselves. For by His coming in the flesh, Christ also came to raise and heal the fall of our nature, and to bring strength and health to the weakness and shadow of the Law given by Moses, and to hide it thus; for this He also did when He placed the truth itself upon the symbols. Therefore, when Matthew began the Gospel and said: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham," immediately after this he presented the genealogy, saying: "Abraham begot Isaac, and Isaac begot Jacob"; and after mentioning those born from unlawful carnal unions and bringing the numbering of the families to the end, he immediately added: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows." For when Mary His mother was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit, wishing to show that against our liquid generation, which occurs after entanglement and carnal union and leads to corruption and death, He placed the generation from the Virgin, which leads to immortality, heals nature itself, which had fallen ill and from there suffered corruption, and raises it to what was from the beginning and originally. For after Adam transgressed the commandment and heard: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return," and fell from paradise, then Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain. Luke, on the other hand, did not proceed in this way. But when he made as the beginning of the Gospel the account of the birth of John the Baptist and the forerunner, and recounted the announcement of the archangel Gabriel to the Holy Virgin, the conception from the Holy Spirit and the divine and marvelous birth, and wrote many other things differently and said that when Jesus was thirty years old according to the age of the body, He came to the Jordan and was baptized—or rather baptized the waters by His descent, sanctified them, and made them for us a perfect bath (for they are holy, purify all sin, and are full of all the gifts of the Spirit)—then he began to present the genealogy, counting the persons whose kinship of lineage according to the Law is known. He seems to do something untimely and unfitting, as if awakened from sleep, and after thirty years he presents the account of the lineage. But the account will also seem timely if we mention what the purpose of the legal kinship of lineage is. What is it? It is that a son, by a second marriage, be assigned and ascribed to the one who died childless, even after his death, and that he raise up his name. That this is what the sacred

words commanded, we have now heard, so that truly there was then this very symbol and image of adoption and resurrection.

Therefore, because baptism gives true and heavenly adoption, showing us as children of God, and is accomplished in the death of Jesus and in the hope of resurrection, for this the divine Luke, after Jesus was baptized, mentioned the legal genealogy, which presents the shadow of adoption, to show that this symbol was confirmed by truth and the diseased state of the Law was restored to health by grace. Therefore, he makes the genealogy ascend from below upward and raises it to God, making known that the grace that comes through baptism raises us and makes us ascend to the divine kinship of lineage, making us children of God, just as the marital union after Adam's transgression of the commandment and the birth from it made us descend downward. Matthew, fulfilling the image of this, made the natural genealogy descend downward, rolling it like a wheel. And that baptism has the power of adoption, Paul testifies, who cries: "You have received the Spirit of adoption"; and the Lord Himself, who says: "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

And that it is also the pledge of resurrection, the same Paul shows again, writing to the Romans: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His." Therefore, the waters of the divine Spirit themselves are also called "the washing of regeneration," so that truly baptism, which confers adoption, is then a true and unfalse pledge of resurrection. For if there were no resurrection, there would also be no baptism, which is given for the hope of resurrection. Hence, the symbol of legal kinship of lineage conferred, through adoption, resurrection to the one who had passed away and was dead, which appeared as in an image and a shadow. As the Teacher of the nations considered this, he wrote to the Corinthians: "If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? For as each is baptized for the resurrection, as he is buried with Christ by the likeness of His death, he is baptized for the hope of the dead." This objection, that is, opposition, of the division, that is, the apparent disagreement of the genealogy, I have reserved

for you today alone, as the one that seemed more important than the others, more worthy of belief, and in need of a dignified and fitting solution and great explanation. I addressed it with the words inspired by God, like the instructions, that is, rules of exercises, that pedagogues cry and teach to those who engage in the struggle. For this custom exists even in bodily struggles, that the athletes, who are more famous than others, worthy of belief, and of equal value in struggles among themselves, are kept ready because of this fact, so that they may strive to be crowned. Why, then, have you not crowned the truth, which has won so remarkably and escaped all grasp? Or rather, its God has crowned it before you, as the sacred book of Ezra also says: "And truth is great and stronger than all things; all the earth calls upon truth, and heaven blesses it; and all works shake and tremble, and there is nothing after it."

But those who ascended to Daphne in a pagan manner esteemed as nothing the truth, which is so terrible and for which all things shake and tremble. But in the dark time of nights, they lit wax torches in the stadium itself and burned incense, secretly bringing about their own destruction; and this, know well, certain strangers made known to me with groaning and weeping. Do you not see the snares of the Slanderer and his hidden traps, which have as a pretext joy and pleasure at first glance but lead to idolatry and the celebration of harmful and almost criminal feasts? And are we not ashamed, when we call ourselves Christians, born from above by the purification from water and the Spirit, and name ourselves children of God, to run also to the solemnities of Satan, which we renounced before divine baptism? For whenever you change your clothes on the one hand and then ascend to the spectacle on the other, wearing a very small linen tunic that hides the arms but not the hands, waving a fennel stalk upward and having, so to speak, all your skin shaved with a razor, behold, is it not evident that you have made a procession and celebrated Olympian Jupiter? And what? Does the harm stop at appearance only? Does it not corrupt the body and come to the loss of the soul? For Olympian Jupiter, the mighty, on the one hand drives women from the spectacle, and on the other hand is mad for young male children; and from this it follows that a very young child, carrying wings, Ganymede, pours drink for him. And as many envy their impure god, the youths commit shameful acts with the youths; for we must cite, in an apostolic and veiled manner, as much as possible, this turpitude. Let parents understand into what pit they let their children plunge, who will partake in

corruption, not pleasure, by sending them to the spectacle! I marvel how the virtuous Jupiter does not ask Apollo, who is near him, not to love Daphne, lest he bring the spectacle back to decency. But the gold of Danae, the swan of Leda, who transformed and changed himself into many forms and corrupted many women, is not capable of obeying advice. And it is not for the learned and instructed to say that these are fables and fictions; for sometimes, when they blush at these ridiculous things, they take refuge in such expressions. Indeed, they have, for the meanings of the feasts they celebrate, reasons drawn from these fables and tales, to use also the words and songs of the poets, in whom these shameful things are arranged with song and expressed in verse, when in the mysteries, if they were truly truthful and pure, all that was fabulous and led to turpitude should have been cast out. As I had many more things to say, ridiculing the foolishness of those who honor their own passions and apply themselves to what their gods, their defenders, possess in their impurity, I stop the homily itself, which has become excessively long, and glorify Christ, who has delivered us from such error and freed us from the servitude of demons. To Him be glory forever and ever! Amen!

**HOMILY 96 AT THE BEGINNING OF THE HOMILY, THE CHOSEN (ἘΚΛΕΚΤΌΣ) OF THE PROPHETS, AND THEN A DISCUSSION, EXAMINATION, AND SOLUTION REGARDING THE LAST PART OF THE DOUBTS THAT AROSE CONCERNING THE GENEALOGY (ΓΕΝΕΛΟΓΊΑ) AND THE GENERATION ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, OUR GOD, AND OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I know that your ears are well-trained for hearing divine doctrines (δόγματα) and for contemplation (θεωρία), which is much more beneficial than all else, brought forth in the Scriptures inspired by God, through which rational souls are nourished, seeking and learning the richness of God's wisdom and soaring toward the desire of the future life, in which there is abundant enjoyment of knowledge, filling and satisfying the desire of those who partake in it, overflowing due to its greatness like great waters escaping from the hand that tries to contain them. As David also considered it, he said to God, who gives such abundant gifts: "I shall be satisfied when Your glory appears to me." (Ps. 17:15) Therefore, I too awaken very promptly for the service of instruction, and before being asked, I hasten and come willingly to pour out intellectual silver. Indeed, when good teaching falls upon ears that know how to listen well, it proves to be very brilliant and joyful. The sacred book of Proverbs has shown an image (εἰκών) of this when it said: "In a pendant of golden earrings is set a precious carnelian (σμάραγδος), and in an ear that hears well (προσεχής) is the word of the wise." (Prov. 25:12) For just as a precious stone, when set in gold, gives and receives ornament, doubling the cause of joy, since from both shines a single magnificent beauty, so too a wise word, when adapted to intelligent ears, achieves superior beauty, above which there is nothing of divine appearance (εὐπρέπεια).

Now, when you yourselves find profit in hearing sagacious and very learned words, to the point that you not only prepare thanks for the speaker but also supply what is lacking in my weak words and anticipate the thought before it is fully expressed—how often they could not express what was proposed earlier—I then approach even what is very difficult to explain with full confidence. One of these (questions) seemed to be that of the genealogy (γενελογία) according to the flesh of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. We will show that the Evangelists (Εὐαγγελισταί) agree

with each other, even though they mentioned different persons (πρόσωπον) and not the same ones, through whom the lineage (γένος) is traced. This has clearly been shown to shine with rays of truth and not to be marked by the persuasion of controversy. Since many (questions) have already been examined earlier, and those that seemed to raise doubts have been resolved, it is necessary to add what is still lacking on this subject. For what is perfect in all things is beautiful. So we must begin the exposition from here. When Matthew briefly recorded the entire genealogy (γενελογία), summarized it in headings (κεφάλαια), divided it into three parts, and said: "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David to the exile in Babylon fourteen generations, and from the exile in Babylon to Christ fourteen generations." (Matt. 1:17) And when he named and enumerated the generation of each family, one wonders why, in the second section, which extends from David to the exile in Babylon, we find on the one hand that the number of those named is not false—for they are ten plus four—and on the other hand, three persons (πρόσωπον) are passed over in silence, even though they are mentioned in history and in the book of Kings. These are Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. Indeed, even though the Evangelist (Εὐαγγελιστής) omitted them, he said: "And Joram begot Uzziah" (Matt. 1:8), when he should have said: "And Joram begot Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, and then Uzziah." What, then, is the reason these persons (πρόσωπον) were omitted?

Beginning a little earlier, I will show this through the Scriptures inspired by the Spirit, as far as I am able. Since Solomon was the son of the divine David and, while still young, had received the kingdom from his father, he asked God for wisdom. And He who desires a good request was about to grant it and revealed this divine message to him, saying: "Because this was in your heart, and you did not ask for riches, glory, or the life of those who hate you, nor did you ask for long life, but you asked for wisdom and understanding to judge My people over whom I have made you reign, I give you wisdom and understanding, and I will also give you riches, possessions, and glory." (1 Kings 3:11–13) And He teaches us on one hand what we should ask for, and on the other, what we will receive, along with an additional portion. For when (Solomon) had asked for wisdom, besides granting it, (God) also added all these other (gifts), because He is indeed the one who also said in the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλια): "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matt. 6:33) But the one who had been

honored with such gifts forgot the one who honored him; he became completely irrational, strayed from His commandments, became intoxicated in his mind with the love of pleasures (ἡδονή), and became entirely a man of delights and the impurity that arises from them, so that he even rushed into idolatry (εἰδωλολατρία). And the divine book says about him: "And foreign women turned his heart after their gods." (1 Kings 11:4) Immediately, the punishment for these (sins) came fittingly, and the Lord of vengeance, mixing kindness with the threat itself, decreed: "I will tear the kingdom from your hand and give it to your servant. Yet, I will not do this in your days, for the sake of David your father; I will tear it from the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away the entire kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David My servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen." (1 Kings 11:12–13) And necessarily, the words of the decree became reality. A certain servant of his, who possessed great cunning and inventive means and was capable of exploiting events, whose name was Jeroboam, rose against him rebelliously and took the greater part of the kingdom, leaving his master’s son only two portions: the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin, which the sacred book also called a single tribe because their inheritance boundaries were adjacent, enclosing the city of God, Jerusalem.

When the kingdom was divided in this way, this man, who was a servant and a fugitive, ruled the ten tribes, which were also called Israel, with Samaria as his royal residence. On the other two tribes, which were assigned the name of Judah—taken from the larger and more populous tribe—Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and his descendants reigned. They had Jerusalem as their royal dwelling, performed the ceremonies of their fathers, and took care of the Levitical priesthood in the Law (νόμος) given by Moses and the rest of the priestly ministry of holy things, though many of them did not perfectly pursue the accuracy and purity of divine legislation (νομοθεσία). Instead, they had a certain inclination of mind toward demons and were captivated by admiration for mountains and high places, where they burned incense as they saw fit. When Jeroboam, this servile and lowly man, raised in servitude, the ruler of Israel—I speak truly of these ten tribes—had increased his servile manner to the highest degree of ignominy, most notorious and known, he stood as an adversary and rebel even against God, who still refrained from punishing him. Through a prophet sent for this purpose, He cried out to him in advance: "And it shall be, if you keep all that I command you and walk in My

ways, I will be with you and build you a stable house, as I built for David." (1 Kings 11:38) What, then, was his thought, fighting against God (θεομαχία), full of revolt and rebellion against Him—a thought truly servile, wicked, and of evil manner? Since the Law (νόμος) commanded that all the people go up to Jerusalem and offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord, this wicked man, fearing that his subjects would abandon him and recognize the legitimate kingdom in Jerusalem, invented and established an idolatrous worship. He made two golden calves and said to these senseless men (ἄνοια)—for I must cite the very words of the divine book— "It is enough for you to go up to Jerusalem! Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." (1 Kings 12:28) And thus, he produced in the wretched themselves a complete and perfect forgetfulness of the true God. From then on, all who received this defiled and hateful kingdom after him followed error and inherited impiety rather than the first place.

When these two kingdoms—the one truly called Judah, governed according to the commandments of the Law in Jerusalem and thus pleasing to the true and only God, and the one truly of Israel, enduring in Samaria in rebellion and worshiping the golden calves in an atheistic manner—were thus divided and in no way mixed, Joram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, took for himself in marriage the daughter of Ahab, king of Israel, who surpassed all before him in impiety. Her name was Athaliah, and this carnal union angered God, through which he begot Ahaziah, whom Matthew did not mention in the genealogy (γενελογία). And when he passed over in silence, after him, Joash and Amaziah, and similarly the three, it was not because it pleased the incarnate God not to seem descended by generation from such a race (γένος). How, indeed, would this please Him who chose beforehand to cleanse all human defilement through His kinship in race (γένος) with us and His incarnation, purer than all, from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary? But because Matthew delivered his Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον) from the beginning to those among the Hebrews who believed, who on the one hand hated the kingdom of Israel, powerful in Samaria, and on the other were attached to the Law (νόμος) of Moses and understood the commandments themselves in a very literal and crude manner—among which was the one that commands: "You shall have no other gods before Me; you shall not make for yourself an idol or any likeness of what is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord your God,

am a jealous God, punishing the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation." (Ex. 20:3–5) And because the idolatry (εἰδωλολατρία) of Jeroboam, who made the golden calves and deceived the ten tribes, was notorious, and Ahab surpassed in impiety to the point that the sacred book says of him: "Ahab did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him, and it was not enough for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam." (1 Kings 16:30–31)

Since the Evangelist (Εὐαγγελιστής) wanted to show by his words that the God of the Law (νόμος) and the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον) is one and the same, he passed over in silence, up to the third generation, those born of such an idolatrous (εἰδωλολατρία) marriage, especially to attract to the faith those among the Hebrews who believed, showing that the God of the Old Testament (Παλαιὰ), the jealous God, is the same, as I said, also the God of the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον). That he did this to bring those among the Hebrews to faith is also made known by this: he gave David the first place before Abraham and said: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." (Matt. 1:1) For the same reason—because among the Hebrews, great honor prevailed for David, as has already been shown by what we said. For this reason, he also divided the genealogy (γενελογία) into double sevens—I mean these three groups of fourteen generations—because the seven is dear to the Hebrews, and it was through what was customary that he attracted them to the faith. For if it was not useful and in accordance with the economy (οἰκονομία) that he passed over Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah for the sake of those among the Jews who believed, but truly because of the punishment of paternal sins, then first Joram should have been passed over—he who took the daughter of Ahab, who was more idolatrous (εἰδωλολάτρης) and impious than all. For what is said: "I am a jealous God, punishing the iniquity of the fathers on the children," (Ex. 20:5) must not be understood as if the children are punished for the sins of their fathers, but because of the sins they themselves commit whenever they make their sin resemble that of their fathers, pursue and imitate the impiety of their parents, and are truly their sons because of their imitation of wickedness. For we are accustomed to say of those who imitate paternal wickedness: "Truly, such a one is the son of his father."That is why the Lord also did not simply say: "Punishing the iniquity of the fathers on the children

to the third and fourth generation," but added: "Of those who hate Me," (Ex. 20:5) meaning: "Whenever they follow their fathers' hatred for God." Sometimes, indeed, for some, He delays the punishment itself and does not bring the penalty, remembering their own repentance, so that they may truly become perfect by changing, or if not, they may be reserved after this life for future torments. For others, who may be among those or later are often seized by the same impiety, He brings a just wrath, showing His care and correcting others by example—a wrath He would have brought on their fathers if He had judged it good to torment them here as well and had not reserved them for future punishments, they who, because of the delay of punishment, did not repent of their sins. Thus, it seems, the sons pay for the sins of the fathers—and this, though it is for their own sins, by which they imitated those who begot them, that they themselves endure the penalties. And if not, that the sons are not at all struck for the sins their fathers committed, it is very close to being heard from the Law (νόμος) given by Moses, which cries out: "Fathers shall not die for their sons, nor sons for their fathers; each shall die for his own sin." (Deut. 24:16) How, then, would the one who said these things bring punishment on innocent sons for a paternal sin, according to the word of those who crudely and unreasonably understand: "I am a jealous God, punishing the iniquity of the fathers on the children"? (Ex. 20:5) To them also, He addresses the word through Ezekiel, saying: "Son of man, what does this proverb mean to you, spoken in the land of Israel: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, says the Lord Adonai, this proverb shall no longer be spoken in Israel. For all souls are Mine—the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son—all souls are Mine; the soul that sins shall die." (Ezek. 18:2–4) And again: "And you have said: 'Why does the son not bear the guilt of his father?' Because the son has practiced justice, righteousness, and mercy." (Ezek. 18:19)

It was because of those who were so crude and, due to a preconceived opinion prevailing among the Jews, were thus disposed in their minds that Matthew concealed by silence these three fathers, who were on one side of the posterity and were mixed with the royalty of those who were much more idolatrous (εἰδωλολάτρης) than anyone—truly Jeroboam and Ahab. But perhaps someone will say: "When the book of the Law says: 'To the third and fourth generation,' (Ex. 20:5) how did Matthew pass over three and not four, since they descended by

generation from this impure kinship, to make the word more persuasive for those among the Hebrews?" Indeed, after these three kings—Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah—who were passed over in silence, the fourth was Uzziah, who was found to excel in nothing over them but desired even the priesthood and attempted, outside the Law (νόμος), to offer incense and was struck with leprosy on his eyelids, which stopped his lack of sense and completely kept him away from the temple. But the reason for this is also known and connected to the same thought, for those not ignorant of the Scriptures inspired by God. Amaziah, the third of those passed over in silence, who reigned, put to death the servants who had killed Joash, his father, but spared their sons.

Now, it is good to cite here the sacred words themselves, found in the fourth book of Kings, which say: "And it came to pass, when the kingdom was established in his hand, that he killed his servants who had murdered his father the king. But the sons of the murderers he did not put to death, according to what is written in the book of the Law of Moses, where the Lord commanded, saying: ‘Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor sons for their fathers; but each shall die for his own sin.’" (2 Kings 14:5–6) Therefore, because (Amaziah) fulfilled legislation (νομοθεσία) that has kindness (φιλανθρωπία) toward sons, the Evangelist (Εὐαγγελιστής) mentioned his son as was fitting, while rendering what is similar to those who are similar, to further attract the Jewish preconception, which thinks that the righteousness of the fathers necessarily benefits the sons—though it does not truly benefit them unless they practice the same righteousness as their fathers and walk in the opposite (way).

Someone may also ask this: "When the prophecy through Jeremiah says concerning Jeconiah: ‘Thus says the Lord: Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not prosper in his days; for none of his offspring shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David and ruling anymore in Judah,’ (Jer. 22:30) how does Matthew say that Christ descends from him by generation?" Regarding this, when Gabriel spoke the words of the annunciation to the Mother of God, the Virgin, he said: "And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David." (Luke 1:32) This indeed seems contrary to the prophecy and will seem not contrary only if we recall that Christ Himself said to the governor (ἡγεμών) Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36) Therefore, the prophecy of Jeremiah pertains to

the human and worldly kingdom, which is dragged in the dust, and not to the divine and heavenly kingdom, fitting for Christ alone, as for God by nature.

In the very words of the prophet, there is also, for those who examine them carefully, a solution to the question, which is very clear. What do they say about Jeconiah? "None of his offspring shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David and ruling anymore in Judah," (Jer. 22:30) so that while the prophecy pertains to the kingdom that endured in Judah, it is indeed without object, since after Jeconiah there was no more king, and on the other hand, he allowed captivity and subjection to the Babylonians. But Christ reigned not over the Jews but over the ends of the earth, while on the one hand, He is before the ages, by essence, the King of the universe, as He is God, and on the other, He heard from the Father, according to the economy, when He became man and voluntarily humbled Himself to this lowliness: "Ask of Me, and I will give the nations as Your inheritance and the ends of the earth as Your possession." (Ps. 2:8) And He says in the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλια), concerning the economy, again Himself: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." (Matt. 28:18) Hence, He did not sit on the corporeal throne of David. But when He was born of his posterity according to the flesh, He fulfilled the promise concerning Him in an intellectual and God-befitting (θεοπρεπῶς) manner, since He is King forever. That is why Gabriel also said in the annunciation: "And of His kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:33) When Matthew wrote: "From the exile in Babylon to Christ, fourteen generations," (Matt. 1:17) the number is fully preserved when the exile—that is, the captivity in Babylon, which lasted until the seventieth year—is counted as one generation, and the birth of Christ is also counted as another generation, because the Evangelist (Εὐαγγελιστής) named and counted the births as generations.

This other (question) was also asked subsequently: "How is it written concerning the Mother of God, the Virgin, and Joseph: ‘And he did not know her until she had given birth to her firstborn Son’?" (Matt. 1:25) Indeed, this (phrase): "He did not know her," was said concerning the carnal union of marriage, as the divine book says: "And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain." (Gen. 4:1) For one must laugh at those who say that he did not know her in the sense that he did not know the great mystery accomplished in her—that is, he did not have a

proper opinion of her, matching the truth, until she had given birth to her firstborn Son. For this is not at all true. For he had obeyed the angel, who said to him: "What is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 1:20) And if not, since he was in fear and doubt, he would not have taken her into his home. If this (phrase): "He did not know her," is understood in relation to the perfect comprehension of the ineffable mystery, he would not have known her even after she gave birth. And then the phrase: "Until she had given birth to her firstborn Son," (Matt. 1:25) would be superfluous. For even after He was born, the depth of the economy escaped Joseph himself and all men alike—as to what end this birth pertained. For if it was not largely that Joseph had very human dispositions in his mind, why did he flee to Egypt? When he was strengthened and confirmed by the successive visions of the angel, how did he serve the economy? And when he returned from Egypt, why was he trembling and afraid when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in place of Herod, his father? Therefore, the phrase: "He did not know her," (Matt. 1:25) was said concerning carnal union and intercourse, and the phrase: "Until she had given birth to her firstborn Son," (Matt. 1:25) must not be understood as making a distinction, as if on the one hand he did not know her before she gave birth, and on the other, he knew her after the birth. The divine book is accustomed to using such an indication, not for a certain temporal limitation only, to define on one hand what is before this (indication) and on the other, to leave free and reserved what is after. But it does this, in many passages, also concerning what is without limit and without end. The prophet Isaiah presents the God of the universe Himself, who says to the children of Israel: "I am He, and until you grow old, I am He." (Isa. 46:4) Though it is clear that He who is at all times must also be after those addressed have grown old. It is written, on the other hand, also concerning Noah: "He sent out a raven from the ark (κιβωτός) to see if the waters had receded; and it went out and did not return until the waters had dried up from the earth." (Gen. 8:6–7) Though it did not return even after the waters had dried. Thus, the Evangelist (Εὐαγγελιστής) also said concerning what was proposed earlier: "Until she had given birth to her Son," (Matt. 1:25) not as if making a distinction and opposing the past time to the future, but affirming this concerning a time without end. For on one hand, he carefully affirmed the time before the birth, saying: "He did not know her," (Matt. 1:25) because it was the time presenting the hypothesis of carnal union and doubt. On the other hand, when this (time) was expressly declared to be free from carnal union, he allows you,

even when silent, to consider by consequence what must be—that after the divine and praiseworthy conception, she who conceived in such a God-befitting (θεοπρεπῶς) manner was no longer subject to the emission of male seed. This resembles another saying of our Savior to the disciples: "Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matt. 28:20) For it is indisputable that He who is with them until the end of the age must, even more, be with them after the end (of the age).

One must consider the precision of the Scripture inspired by God. For it did not say: "The son, her firstborn," as if (Mary) had been, after this, the mother of other children as well. But it said: "Her Son," and then continued indefinitely: "Firstborn." For He truly became the firstborn of the whole Church; just as the first Adam was of the earth, so He too, when He was formed from the sinless Virgin, appeared as the firstfruits of our race (γένος). That is why He cried out beforehand through the prophet of the Psalms, saying: "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You." (Ps. 22:22) And Paul also wrote to the Romans concerning Him: "That He might be the firstborn among many brothers." (Rom. 8:29) And He became the firstborn from the dead when He first began our resurrection, as to all (Col. 1:18). And He was not only made but was also by nature the firstborn before the ages; and He was eternally begotten by God and Father, as can be found in the same letter, written thus: "Who is the image (εἰκών) of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." (Col. 1:15) Because of all this, after the Evangelist (Εὐαγγελιστής) said: "Her Son," he continued indefinitely: "Firstborn."

I omit to say that it is not necessary for the one who is firstborn to his mother to be firstborn of many (brothers); for one may be both firstborn and only son. Those of the house of James were on one hand sons of Joseph from previous marriages and on the other were called, by consequence, brothers of Jesus because of the economy, since Joseph was also considered His father. That is why Luke also, in the Acts (Πράξεις), says: "These all continued with one accord in prayer, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers." (Acts 1:14) And this, though if they had been hers, he should have said: "With Mary the mother of Jesus and with her sons." But nowhere at all do we see that the Evangelists

(Εὐαγγελισταί) called them her sons, blushing at the truth and speaking according to the economy.

These three homilies on the genealogy (γενελογία) according to the flesh of Christ, our God and Savior, we have set apart and offered in His honor in truth, as well as (in the honor) of the Father and the Holy Spirit. For in them is the holy Trinity, which He neither divided nor multiplied when He became incarnate without change. For He is one, even when He became man, and not two, though He is of two—divinity and humanity. Therefore, by the power of the holy Trinity, which is without beginning and eternal, three times, as in a struggle, we have wrestled with the adversaries' grips, and three times we have shown that the truth wears the crown. May it be that you also show yourselves strong against the passions and are crowned by the virtues, against wickedness, for the glory of God, to whom be glory forever! Amen!

## HOMILY 97 ON THECLA, THE FIRST OF THE MARTYRS. TABLE OF CONTENTS

When I hear David, in a prophetic spirit, symbolizing and prefiguring the Church, addressing its head, who is Christ, and saying: “The queen stood at your right, clothed in a golden robe and offering a varied appearance”, immediately and at once, my mind is drawn to the valiant martyr Thecla, and I see her as an animated column, who through her deeds reveals within herself the words of prophecy, as if in writings, because she also possessed the virtues of the entire Church when she gathered them all at once. The Church is the assembly, that is, the gathering of those who have believed in Christ, composed of each of them, as well as of its members, and forms a single body, beautiful, magnificent, immensely great, fashioned and arranged by divine baptism and the evangelical commandments, to occupy the first place in terms of beauty, as Paul also truly writes with the prophet David, saying about it: “Christ loved his Church and gave himself for her, to sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present to himself the glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish”. Have you seen the harmony of the words and the terms? “The queen stood at the right”, David cried. “That he might present to himself the glorious Church”, Paul cried to him, and, to say what is more fitting, I will cry with him. And this (word): “She stood near you”, shows the promptness and eagerness of the Church concerning faith. For she was present promptly, of her own accord, in terms of the call. For what is more prompt than, on the one hand, Christ saying to Peter’s family: “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men”, and, on the other hand, those leaving behind, along with the fish, equally their nets and following him, and likewise, with the call, the sons of Zebedee leaving the boat and their father?

I omit, in fact, to say that Matthew, while sitting at his tax collector’s booth, lying in wait for tricks and forced profits or taxes, when he heard: “Follow me!”, also forgot, to speak briefly, that he was a tax collector. And you will see, also on the occasion of the teaching of the Apostles, that there are things greater than these, namely those that occurred in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Peter spoke in Judea, after the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to those who had crucified him, while the passion was still recent; it was three thousand and again five

thousand who believed at the same time as they heard him. Paul addressed the people in Athens, and he drew to himself the Areopagites, those severe and hard-to-change judges, and there was nothing harder or stronger than them in judgments. He, flying like a bird, also gathered cities and nations en masse by the word of faith, as with a net. When the Church had gathered in this way, she stood near the king, (like) a net that is exceedingly prompt, or rather the expression: "She stood", shows that it is not only prompt but also perfect and complete. For we are accustomed to say: "A fact stood", "A meaning stood", that is, has been accomplished and has come to the fitting end, which is especially confirmed by the sequence that follows. "The queen", it is said, "stood at the right", because it also belonged to the queen to stand near the king, in proximity, she who, in any respect, suffers no lack. For once she ceased taking counsel from lying gods and dishonorable passions and changed to a new and pure life, in place of the old and defiled conduct, she stood perfect, when she was associated with the king both for honor and for the name, when she entered with him into the bridal chamber like a bride, who says through the Song of Songs: "The king has brought me into his chamber". "One is my dove, my perfect one"; dove, on the one hand, as she who is entirely spiritual—for the spirit is significantly recognized under the appearance of the dove—perfect, on the other hand, because she is clothed in a golden robe and offers a varied appearance, as David said. For, on the one hand, because of the very diverse procession of virtues—justice, courage, chastity, wisdom, and the virtues that branch out beneath them—the robe offers a varied appearance; and, on the other hand, in terms of beauty, it is uniform, presents a single color, and is perfect. For it is also entirely golden when it is perfect in terms of familiarity with God, to which it prepares those who have applied themselves to the virtues. Now divinity is something simple and uniform, as is the light that is produced by it in those who partake of it. And it was not without effort, nor without purpose, nor haphazardly that the Church rose to such glory; but it was chiefly when she lent her ear to Christ, as a daughter does to her father and master, that she thus attached herself to him as her king, and from the beginning she heard him say: "Listen, my daughter, see and incline your ear, and forget your people and the house of your father, and the king will desire your beauty".

Someone may say to me, hearing these words: "You have forgotten, O speaker, that you are writing for us a eulogy of the Church, and not of Thecla". But let him

listen, both fittingly and truly! Wait, O good one, to learn the beauty of the original image that the word traces for you, as on a painting, and then you will know clearly that the martyr whose image it has painted resembled exactly all that beautiful appearance. However, because you, as a feverish listener, grant no power to the word itself and pursue us concerning what precedes, as if striking even with a whip, halting the momentum and interrupting the course itself, examine concerning Thecla what has been said by me, and you will see simply that it is through the person of the Church and what has been said about her that the martyr is prefigured. For why? There was Paul, teaching in Iconium, in the city that holds the first place in the eparchy of the Lycaonians, or rather there was Christ speaking in him. And Thecla, who by race and wealth occupied the first position in the city, who hid under bodily beauty the glory from these advantages and possessed, for the moment, without being deprived of them, those goods that are such easy prey, was sitting secretly by a window above a house, seeing the teacher himself more by hearing than by sight. And at once she fulfilled the image of the Church, which was foretold by the prophet David. She listened obediently, like a daughter; she inclined her ear; she forgot her people and the house of her father; she became dear to the king and stood near him at his right, clothed in the garments of virtues and offering a varied appearance. For when, by the words of the future life and the kingdom of heaven, she had tasted only with the tip of her lips what is truly said—that more than all men, chaste and pure souls enter at the same time as the bridegroom, brightly lighting the lamps of purity with oil—she also loved virginity, and in exchange for everything, she received it.

And from this, her mother was mad, while she was filled with admiration for the tent of this world, fascinated and nailed in her mind concerning the flesh, and she imagined the bridal bed of her daughter, the marriage chamber, the dances and revelries of open receptions, the songs, the procession of crowns, the softness and pleasure found in these feasts, the marriage bed, the procreation of children, the lineage of the race, and the support of her own old age. For women who love lamentations are accustomed to weep for what is expected, as if it had already been obtained, and thus twist the very long chain of sorrows and tears that exist in lamentations. And when she had tired of trying to change the young girl's pious and religious eagerness, she called for help the fiancé of the latter. Thamyris was his name. And when he came running, burning with the fire of desire, he began, in

a flattering and amorous manner, to cradle with his songs the one he loved. And as she was silent and looked with manly courage, she blamed the weakness and charm of the words themselves, letting them go into the air; and she thought that the one speaking to her was not present, while in truth she was attached and nailed to the words of Paul, building with them the inner man, imagining future things, and thinking that she was no longer in a body from then on. And Thamyris, afflicted by bad love and empty of persuasion, necessarily turned love into hatred. For such are those who lose what is dear to them. And when he had come to Paul with great forces and engines of war, he led him and brought him to the proconsul, while he was being dragged. After he approached the tribunal of the prince and spoke of chastity and faith as Paul happened to speak of them, he arranged for him to be taken to prison. As for Thecla, who at night had come to stand near the teacher and the one bound in chains—for she also heard him say: "The word of God is not bound"—who abundantly drew from the streams of his teaching, who poured herself over his chains and kissed his bonds and fetters, as those that let holiness escape, he dragged her to the judge, and not her alone, but united at the same time with the bound one and the Evangelist. When he had scourged Paul on one side, he drove him away; on the other side, he delivered Thecla, who had learned from her master's chains to suffer for Christ, to a blazing fire. For this penalty had been pronounced against her, not by the judge, but before him, by Thecla's mother and also by the entire mass of the city, men and women, as against one who breaks marriage and overturns the laws of nature.

As for her, when she had received in her mind the God who was incarnate of the Virgin and unchanged became man—for to him she had consecrated and given her virginity as a sacred thing, and his sign she had traced before the fire—she walked on the wood and dared to go up to meet the flame. At once, a lightning bolt and a storm, on one hand, swept over the earth and shook it; a cloud, on the other hand, when it had burst above and let fall a heavy and persistent rain, mixed with hail, extinguished the fire and, among those standing around the fire, showed that some were dead and others fleeing, and it delivered Thecla, unexpectedly for the unbelievers and not unexpectedly for the faithful. For when does the God of wonders not act? Do you see how the martyr resembled to the utmost the image of the Church, I mean the maternal one, in terms of the principal exaltation? "On this rock", says our Savior, "I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not

prevail against it". That is why the flame did not conquer the valiant one. Someone, coming forward publicly, will say to us: "In what was the daughter inferior to the maternal image? Did she not stand near the king? Was it not promptly? Was it not perfectly? Was it not when she was clothed as a queen and offered a varied appearance, covered with all the garment and ornament of virtues, and when in this way she passed through the fire and showed that all that belongs to her is truly golden and tested by flame and not false?" This resemblance of daughters to their mother—for many, indeed, later envied the virginity and martyrdom of Thecla, even if they stop far from the resemblance in everything—the divine David sang beforehand, saying: "After her, virgins shall be brought to the king; her companions shall be brought to you; they shall be brought with joy and gladness; they shall be led into the king's temple". For, on the one hand, this word: "After her", indicates the resemblance and makes known that they went after their mother; for thus the prophet also cried to the God of the universe: "My soul clings after you". On the other hand, this word: "Her companions", shows that they were in the closest resemblance; for they were not brought differently into the king's temple, about which the psalmist again sang prophetically with rhythm: "Holy is your temple, wonderful in righteousness".

When Thecla had been raised to this honor, endured the martyrdom of the flame, and borne witness to Christ, she was again among the disciples and listened to Paul's teaching, while she wanted to be instructed and learn that one must often suffer for Emmanuel. For when she had also cut her hair because of the harm from beauty, she made for her virile spirit the fitting exterior. And she attached herself to the preacher of truth, preaching at the same time as he. And indeed, as she was also his disciple, she possessed the preparation of the master. Let no one say: "And how did Paul write to the Corinthians: I do not permit a woman to teach? And how did those who governed the holy Churches ordain in a canon: It shall not be lawful for a woman to have her hair cut or to wear a man's robe?" For these light prescriptions, carefully made by some, remain for those, while they do not become a law for others. And legislations are made according to the strength of the majority, and they are not defined and arranged for everyone in general based on one or two. For Thecla, on the one hand, possessed, before the exterior, the strength of reality; the others, on the other hand, had an exterior lacking practice, which had to be ridiculed with shame. And after the legislation and prohibition,

even to those who can rival Thecla, it is no longer permitted to do this. For one must submit to general definitions and arrangements, because a commandment of the Law also orders us not to remove the ancient boundaries that our fathers placed. Now they are removed, even if one goes outside the Law to the right. However, the courageous woman, who breathed like air the struggles for religion, came, on the one hand, in a man's exterior and with virile intention to this city of Antioch; on the other hand, as she was Thecla, she could not hide. For both these hunters of beauty and these persecutors of religion attacked her, dragging her, some toward impurity, others toward idolatry, some against others. But the virgin and martyr was impregnable to them in both respects. For when a certain Alexander had also been sick with the ineffectual love of Thamyris, he became mad because of the saint's beauty. And when he had failed and missed his goal, as the judge had ordered that Thecla be served as food to wild beasts—while he gave and invented spectacles of this kind at that time—this man, burning with two very opposite passions, softness and cruelty, perplexed on one hand by both and leaning on the other hand toward cruelty, because he had truly cut off all hope concerning what was loved, gathered and assembled from everywhere every kind of wild beast of every species. But she, ready to suffer all, appeared again impregnable to all, when, by prayer alone and the extension of her hands, she blunted the untamed teeth of the beasts, while she lay, as among sheep, amid these untamed and unbroken beasts, without fear.

Let the pagans, whose palate is wide open for the legendary and futile lyre of Orpheus, which, they say, soothes wild beasts with its sounds, hear this! Let the Jews consider how a single woman extinguished the fire's heat, following the example of the three young men, passed through the flame without being burned, and appeared impregnable and fearsome, like Daniel, not only to lions but to every kind of wild beast, and let them confess after such wonders that the God of the Law and the Gospels is one, or rather let them not be deceived by distant and vain hopes, but by what is excellent let them understand that Christ has come and not wait for the anointed one who is never to come! For the prophet Isaiah, on the one hand, as he was in pain, cried out: "Rich women, rise and hear my voice; daughters, hear my words with hope!" And absolutely none of them heard as one ought to hear. Thecla, on the other hand, as she was rich in all the things that seem to make happiness on earth—race, beauty, and wealth—went beyond the prophet's

words. For she heard, even without being called, the words of Paul, and she heard them with hope. And in exchange for this single hope, she let everything go, when she imitated the merchant in the Gospel, who found a single pearl of great price, as our Savior says, and acquired it in exchange for all he had. Likewise, just as Adam, who was created in the image of God, before he transgressed the commandment, was surrounded, like a king, by wild beasts and gave names to all, like the owner of a flock, so also Thecla, when she had put off the old man and purified her mind—the divine image—and learned from Paul this word: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation", and had fulfilled it, was surrounded by a troop of wild beasts, and these fierce beasts were tamed for her.

And when she had passed through this unharmed, had at the same time fought in many martyrdoms, and had been crowned with all the crowns of this kind, she departed for Seleucia of Isauria. And when she had peacefully finished her course there and kept the faith, her body, on the one hand, she entrusted to the earth, where it is now hidden in a holy and famous temple and works what is proper to Thecla, that is, healings and wonders; with her soul, on the other hand, she journeyed to the choirs of angels and the heavenly dwellings. And from there she looks down and visits joyfully and peacefully the city of Seleucia on the one hand, because of her body, and this city of ours on the other hand, because of her struggles, since it was truly in this one that she accomplished them, which, I am persuaded, she also especially helps and cares for. For even now she still has a predilection for the struggles for religion, from which come crowns and proclamations of triumphs, and then also for this place where she waged them. For similarly, the place where they lined up is dear to the triumphant combatants, even after the victory. It is because of this that we have set apart, offered, and consecrated to our Savior Christ this oratory under the name of Stephen in truth and under hers. For he, on the one hand, is also the first of martyrs among men, and she, on the other hand, is the beginning of martyrdoms among women, after she confirmed her designation and became the glory of God—for Thecla is the "glory of God," because the children of the poets give the name "kles" to glory itself—so that in this also she might fulfill the commandment of her teacher Paul, who says: "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit", after she had glorified him doubly, by virginity and by martyrdom. Therefore, you too, O virgins, since you have, after the Mother of God, such an image of perfection—the first of

martyrs—must look to her, imitate by this her intellectual beauty, and paint your souls with the colors of the virtues. But for you also who are under the yoke of marriage, it is possible to gather from the same image an honest and chaste life, so that, when the name of Christ is glorified by all of you, you may secure for yourselves the glory and grace from above. For he who says: “Those who glorify me, I will glorify”, does not lie. To him be all glory and power, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

**HOMILY 98 ON THE PROPHECY OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH, WHICH WAS BROUGHT BY MATTHEW: BEHOLD MY SERVANT, IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL PLEASED, AND THE OTHER (WORDS) THAT (COME) AFTER, AND ON WHAT WAS SAID BY OUR SAVIOR: EVERY SIN AND (EVERY) BLASPHEMY WILL BE FORGIVEN TO MEN; BUT THE BLASPHEMY THAT (IS) AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL NOT BE FORGIVEN, AND HE WHO SPEAKS A WORD AGAINST THE SON OF MAN, IT WILL BE FORGIVEN HIM; BUT HE WHO SPEAKS A (WORD) AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT, IT WILL NOT BE FORGIVEN HIM, NEITHER IN THIS AGE, NOR IN THE (AGE) TO COME.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Since I have truly learned that it is not with negligence, but with great care that you hear the divine Book, and especially that of the holy Gospels, and not only with the ears of the body but also with those of the heart, so as not to receive without examination the external expression of the words themselves, but to also seek the understanding placed within them—for the teaching of the Spirit knows those who hear thus and seeks such ears and praises them, saying: “The heart of the wise seeks knowledge, and the ears of the wise seek understanding”—I now wish to publicly explain what was once the subject of doubts for some after reading and was addressed to me in the form of a question, and which makes you very discerning in hearing divine words. It is good, indeed, that the profit derived from this may also be shared by those who partake of one bread and one cup, because, truly, we who belong to Christ are all equally one body. We must therefore say what the (words) were that were the subject of these doubts. Matthew said in what was read then: “And great multitudes followed Him. And He healed all (the sick) and charged them not to make Him known, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: Behold My servant, in whom My soul is well pleased, My beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall declare judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry out, nor shall anyone hear His voice in the streets. He shall not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, until He sends forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.” And that on one hand this (word): “Behold My servant, in whom I am well pleased”, that is, "whom I have chosen," as if spoken to the Son in the name of God the Father, and this (word): “In whom My soul is well

pleased", and this (word): "I will put My Spirit upon Him", are words that suit the economy and the humble manners of the Incarnation, which the only Word willingly took upon Himself when He became the firstfruits of all the human race, (firstfruits) pure and without trace of sin, when, because of us who had been rejected and (who) were not found to be beautiful, He was chosen, when, because of those who were hated, favor was shown to Him and He was loved, and when, because of those who were empty of the Spirit, He received the Spirit as man, He who truly possessed it by essence as God, is clear. For it is He who also in the prophet Isaiah made this clearly known, saying: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me." Is it not clear and known to every man what is said here? Does not the meaning of the words shine like a bright light? "The Spirit," He says, "which is in Me as God, has been upon Me according to the economy, because I have condescended to be called the Christ, inasmuch as I am anointed for the whole world."

Here is what is worthy of inquiry: How did God say of Him through the prophet: "He shall not cry out", when John clearly says: "On the last day of the great feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying: If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink"? And how did He say: "His voice shall not be heard in the streets", when our Savior Himself plainly said to those who seized Him at the time of the passion, or rather to the multitudes—for we must in no way depart from the divinely inspired words—"Every day I sat teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me"? And He heard the disciples say: "Master, the multitudes press and throng You, and You say: Who touched Me?" And it was in all the cities and villages that He traveled, in Galilee and Judea, teaching in the synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, so that His fame spread throughout all Syria, as it is written. How then, according to the prophet's word, did no one hear His voice in the streets? And how did He not break the bruised reed, He who with a word alone also withered the fig tree? How does this agree with the prophecy? Consider, if you will, the understanding, and you will see the perfect harmony of the words of the Spirit. For this (word): "He shall not cry out", must not be taken to refer to the cry of the Law and teaching—and sometimes it is also said in a manner worthy of God that Jesus indeed appeared to have cried out, that is, to have raised His voice often—but to the cry that is reprehensible, namely, that which arises from bitterness and strife and is alien to all gentleness. Therefore, the Evangelist, explaining the prophetic

thought itself, placed first this (word): “He shall not strive”, and then added this (word): “He shall not cry out”, showing that it is the cry arising from strife that our Savior did not utter; and (this), although the words are presented differently and obscurely in Isaiah. First, indeed, there is this (word): “He shall not cry out”; and instead of this (word): “He shall not strive”, it is found: “He shall not be quiet”, that is, "He shall not cease crying." For such are those who cry out from strife and contention, that they do not yield or cease crying, but raise clamors without order, endlessly, uselessly, and into the air. It is concerning such a cry that the Apostle, writing to the Ephesians, said: “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.” It is such a cry that the Sodomites also produced, and the God of the universe said of them: “The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very grievous.” And He also accused Israel through the prophet Isaiah, saying: “He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.” How then should He have uttered the cry that is not praiseworthy, but arises from strife and bitterness, He who said to His disciples: “Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart”; and who said with gentleness to the Jews, who sought to kill Him and were furious like wild beasts: “Why do you seek to kill Me?” and again: “Now you seek to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God”; and who answered the servant of the high priest, who struck Him on the cheek dishonorably: “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?”

Just as He did not utter the reprehensible cry, so neither did He teach in the broad streets (markets) and public places, seeking vain glory, but in the temple and synagogues, where teaching is appropriate. And it seems He gave the greater part of His teaching in deserted places, on the mountain and by the lake, and nowhere is it recorded that He taught in the street. And that the name "market," that is, "street," signifies vain glory, our Savior Himself testifies when He said of the hypocritical Pharisees: “They love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men.” For the name "synagogue" is akin to "market," that is, "street." He rebukes them, showing their ostentation and public display. Thus, on one hand, this (word): “He shall not strive nor cry out”, signifies gentleness and peace; and on the other hand, this (word): “No one shall hear His voice in the streets”, (indicates) that He had no love for glory, ostentation, pride, or the license that comes from vain glory. And if by chance, even concerning the

Pharisees, He allowed Himself to rebuke them, that is, to reprove them, this is not a denial of gentleness. For at certain times and in certain places, we too must awaken and rise up sternly against wickedness and not endure with passive indifference those who need corrective rebuke. This (word): “His voice shall not be heard in the streets”, also has another lofty meaning. For it was in parables, in silence, and in secret that He, as something precious, expounded the word of teaching, lest the holy things be given to dogs and pearls cast before swine. For these are they who dwell in the streets. Therefore, when His disciples also asked Him: “Why do You speak to the multitude in parables?” He said: “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.”

On the other hand, He did not break the bruised reed, (that is) the weakness of the Jews; nor did He quench the smoking flax, or that which smolders, (that is) their fury, which on one hand was kindled against Him, and on the other hand grew weary and weakened and even destroyed itself as it burned. For such is the flax, which is consumed as it burns and is chiefly the food of smoke, not fire. Such fury, which needs no one to quench it, our Savior therefore did not quench, so that, while it fought against the truth, He might show the justice of Him who could quench it, and He endured it and made those guilty of judgment who were unjustly furious and did not repent. For this is that (word): “He shall not quench the smoking flax, but He shall bring forth judgment unto truth”, which the Evangelist indeed omitted, though it was in the prophecy. This same prophecy, concerning the smoking flax that was not quenched and signifies Jewish fury, also says another thing, showing the patience of Him who endured it. It will burn without harm until He brings judgment to the earth and the Gentiles trust in His name. What is this? It is the nature of flax to kindle suddenly and shine at once and be consumed in a short time. Now the fury of the Jews, Christ did not quench; but when it had burned, flared up, and blazed against Him often, He still did not let it fail or perish, until, after the cross He willingly endured in the flesh was planted and the resurrection followed, He brought it forth, that is, sent it forth, unto victory, and made it accomplish its judgment, (He) who was judged among the Jews when Pilate judged, and (He) who judged the Accuser when He came to the passion for our salvation and said: “The ruler of this world is judged”; and again: “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am

lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." The Gentiles, indeed, trusted in His name after He brought forth judgment unto victory.

Do you see how these (words) of the prophecy agree with the Gospels? And it is not out of place to connect to these same (words) also what is sung by David, namely this (word): "That You may be justified in Your words and overcome when You are judged." For, changing the expression according to the meaning of the thought, what Isaiah said: "Until He brings judgment to the earth", Matthew said: "Until He sends forth judgment unto victory." Now the divine Book is accustomed to call "victory" the triumph, for example: "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?" And: "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And one may also take in a simple sense this (word): "He shall not break the bruised reed"; and this (word): "His voice shall not be heard in the streets." At the time of the saving passion, indeed, our Savior received a reed with gentleness from those who mocked Him; and He did not break it, as one who bore the shame with difficulty, when He leaned upon it. And likewise Pilate, according to John's word, brought Jesus out and sat on the judgment seat in a place that is "paved with stone," and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. This "paved" place is necessarily a broad street; and it was there that, according to the prophecy, as a sheep, He was led to be slain, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth. And necessarily no one heard His voice in the streets. The divine Book is accustomed to call the reed "bruised," because it is easily broken, crushed, and near to breaking. Therefore, it takes it, as we have said, as an example of weakness, saying: "On the staff of this bruised reed, on Egypt."

This prophecy, which we have now discussed, Matthew cited because, before it, he had said that Jesus healed a man with a withered hand; and he continued: "The Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. But Jesus knew it and withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all and charged them not to make Him known." Because, therefore, our Lord Jesus, though He was God by nature and the power of the eternal Father, reduced Himself to smallness, when He deigned to endure the offenses of the Pharisees peacefully—for He was also truly man—and accomplished the economy without raising His voice, though as God He could have slain all who rose against Him in masses, the Evangelist himself, having no

other example of all this greatness of gentleness and meekness, cited the prophecy, which used the bruised reed that is not broken and the smoking flax that is not quenched, to show that His patience surpassed, in a wise and economical manner, with a light step, what was so hard, without displaying the greatness of His own divinity, like one who fears to touch the smoking flax that is immediately quenched, or to lean on the bruised reed, or to bring a word to His mouth to be heard by any of those outside. For all this seems to have been said as by an example, showing the gentleness and peace of Him who governed.

We must also discuss what was asked among the things read in the sequel, in addition to what has been said, and give it the fitting solution: it is what was said by our Savior: “Every sin and (every) blasphemy will be forgiven to men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.” Is it, indeed, that if someone blasphemes against the Father or the Son, saying that existing things are uncreated, that is, self-existent, and not created, and that they are not governed by the Providence that rules the universe, or if he who professes that God exists on one hand, on the other denies the existence, that is, the hypostasis, of the Son, and agrees to say that He does not exist at all—is such a one to be considered as uttering blasphemies that are tolerable and worthy of pardon? And (this), though the holy Trinity is equal in honor and of one essence, one kingdom, and one glory? But what is said in an indefinite and general way, our Savior restricted in a proper definition by what He added next. For when He had said simply and freely: “Every sin and (every) blasphemy will be forgiven to men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven to men”, He continued: “And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the age to come.” Thus, what is concluded is this, when the sentence is read entirely by consequence, and not partially with a break: "Every sin and (every) blasphemy that is blasphemed and sinned against the Son of Man will be forgiven to men; but that which is against the Spirit will not be forgiven."

Now, after a divine and marvelous sign occurred from Christ, through the Holy Spirit, who was in Him by essence and of whose gifts He is Himself the giver to others, while praise was due, these blasphemous words were uttered. For it was a man who was at once blind, deaf, and demon-possessed, afflicted with three

sufferings, and besides the two principal senses, also lacked the operation of understanding—for such are those possessed by the madness that comes from demons—whom He healed in a manner worthy of God and at the same time lovingly, so that this deaf and blind man might indeed speak and see. And the race of the Jews, who fight against God and are ready for blasphemy, said: “He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.” Now we must take heed and observe that here the sacred Book calls "deaf" one who could not speak. Therefore, when our Savior referred His words to this blasphemy by way of rebuke, and showed by many (actions) and said in plain terms that Satan does not cast out Satan and that He Himself casts out demons by the Spirit of God, He then used the words cited earlier, saying: “Every blasphemy against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but that against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.”

What is this? As the Jews were blind concerning the lowly and humble condition (taken) for our sake in the Incarnation of the Word of God and our Savior, so that, as if walking in darkness, they stumbled against it, and it was to them the cornerstone, chosen and precious, as the prophecy proclaimed beforehand, a rock of offense and a stone of stumbling, and they imagined not at all the existence before the ages, the incorporeal generation from the Father, the equality and immutability in every respect with Him who begot Him, but had an opinion that crawls on the earth, they said: “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary?” and again: “You are a Samaritan and have a demon”; and again: “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, make Yourself God.” This, then, is all they said in blaspheming against the Son of Man, being offended by the economy according to the flesh, as I have said, which our Lord said would be forgiven them, since they have as an excuse their ignorance of the mystery, its lowliness and humility as man. Therefore, He said: “It will be forgiven to men”, and not "to you," as if to say: "Thus to men who do not know the depth of the economy I give forgiveness."

But the insults they uttered, blaspheming against the divine signs and the wondrous miracles He performed and worked by the Spirit who was in Him and is of the same essence, when, as I said, they said to Him: “He casts out demons by Beelzebub”, these, as they pertain to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, having from the very facts what befits God and leaving them no room for excuse, Christ

said would not be forgiven them, because they had no veil of ignorance there. Therefore, concerning this also He clearly said this (word): “It will not be forgiven to men”, bringing against them the charges of accusation. For they ought, as reasonable men, not to have behaved senselessly nor blasphemed concerning what is so clear and known, what is before the eyes and seen, and what cries out what befits God. For, while the word "man" is found in both cases, He introduced sometimes forgiveness, sometimes accusation, so that it is not because of the insult—for elsewhere they called Him possessed and a Samaritan—but because of their blasphemy concerning divine wonders and their ignorance that wrath comes.

And this blasphemy against the Son of Man, which is forgiven and judged less than that against the Holy Spirit, we must understand as lasting until the time of the cross, because until then Christ veiled with words and actions befitting the economy the exaltation of His divinity. For after the cross and resurrection from the dead, when He is no longer known according to the flesh, as the Apostle says: “Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer”, He will give no pretext of forgiveness to those who blaspheme against Him. Then, indeed, then, no longer is it blasphemy against the Son of Man, who has completed and passed the conditions of emptying, has ascended on high, even incarnate, and is seated with the Father at His right hand, though in an incorporeal manner He fills and will fill the universe and was and is wholly incomprehensibly above all. Therefore, He said: “Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man.” For him who blasphemes against Him after the end of the economy, as for him who raged against the Holy Spirit and insulted Him and sinned beyond forgiveness, there will therefore be no forgiveness of sin. We say this if someone remains in the blasphemy itself until the end of his life and so departs from life. For if he comes to repent, when the days of this life are given him abundantly, it is clear and certain that repentance itself prevails over every sin, since it certainly gives forgiveness to those who truly repent as they ought.

Therefore, as in a real example, to make what has been said clearer, let us suppose that two men blasphemed at that time. One, on one hand, stumbled at the flesh and said to Jesus, if it so happened: “You, being a man, make Yourself God”; the other, on the other hand, provoked to blasphemy against the divine signs worked by the Holy Spirit, said: “He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”

And both were led by grave sins into the way that leads to death. To the one, as he who blasphemed against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven; to the other, as he who sinned and offended against the Holy Spirit, will be condemned, since he will certainly not obtain forgiveness in this age, if it so happens, nor in the age to come.

And some say that it is also by way of prophecy that our Lord said this: “The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.” "For He knew beforehand," they say, "that some among the godless heretics, of whom the impious Macedonius was the leader, would degrade the Holy Spirit from the glory and divinity which He truly shares with the Father and the Son, because our Savior Himself said in the Gospels concerning the Paraclete: “He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak”; and: “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine.” Therefore," they say, "He voluntarily used this severe word, carefully made Himself small, and said that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is greater than that against Himself, forbidding in advance the heretics to open their blasphemous mouths against the Spirit, as against one who is lesser and not of the same essence as the Father and the Son."

And there is one who gives to this same passage yet a third explanation, in a higher sense. For the Incarnation of our Savior holds the place of introductory doctrines, that is, those that begin. And introductory doctrines are those which teachers deliver by way of catechism little by little, for the knowledge concerning God, to those who are now beginning in religion and are led as by the first principles, that is, the first signs. For the knowledge concerning the holy Trinity was also inaccessible and intangible to men. But one of the Trinity, the Word of God, after He became incarnate without change, was made man, and humbled Himself voluntarily, presented to us the knowledge concerning Himself, and the Father, and the Holy Spirit, when He spoke with us as with children, because of His likeness to us, and because He partook of the same nature as we, except for sin, and became the firstfruits of our race. And in this repentance is included, and there is absolutely nothing that escapes this remedy. Yet for these enormous sins, the healing itself is difficult, painful, and very laborious, and requires many tears, toils, and pains.

And let no one, because our Lord said that (these blasphemies) will not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in the age to come, be deceived or deceive himself,

and by distinguishing imagine on the contrary that among sins there are some that on one hand are not forgiven in this age, and on the other hand are forgiven in the age to come. For it is clearly known that this (word): “Neither in the age to come”, pertains not to a contrary distinction but to an extension in time. For, as He wished to inspire fear, He added what is acknowledged as true. For it is certain that what is not forgiven in this age is not forgiven in the age to come. For often we find that God Himself lengthens, by a kind of threat, what is indisputable, to inspire fear, as when He says through Moses: “There is no one who can deliver out of My hand.” For who can, when He does not wish, forcibly deliver from His hands him who has once fallen into them? Thus He says here also that it will not be forgiven in this age. "And you," He says, "will not resist Me in this; and consequently, think also of the age to come, and consider where sin sends you, which is not forgiven in this present age." It is certain indeed that it sends you into the age that is awaited and into the torment that is endless, where, according to the word of the psalmist prophet, “in death there is no remembrance of You; in Sheol who will give You thanks?”, in the dwelling beyond and at the judgment. For because, generally, we all pay attention to what causes sorrow and is full of labor, what is in this age, while we take absolutely no account of the age to come, therefore our Lord, when He had said: “The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not forgiven in this age”, added what is acknowledged (as true), to inspire fear: “Nor in the age to come”; which would certainly be so, even if it had not been said. Let us also fear, then: to forget that we commit great sins when through much negligence we take little account of small sins and, as Paul says, when we grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom we were sealed for the day of salvation. But at every hour, so to speak, let us examine ourselves, carefully considering whether Christ is in us by our works. For it is a terrible thing, as we hear the divine Book say, to fall into the hands of the living God and to be sent into the age to come and the fire that is not quenched. May it come to pass that we all be delivered from it and obtain the kingdom of heaven, by the grace and love for mankind of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, with whom be glory and power to the Father with the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## HOMILY 99 HOMILY ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY WHEN, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, HE (SEVERUS) RECEIVED ORDINATION AND WAS ELEVATED TO THE EPISCOPATE. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Today, some of those whose desires are inclined toward the flesh and who are dazzled by the appearances of external things may imagine that I am overflowing with happiness and joy because I have reached this day, which marks the completion of my fourth year as a bishop. But as for me, I acknowledge that I owe thanks to God, who, out of His love, not only called me to this dignity—"He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap," as David sings—but also abundantly granted me time to prepare for repentance, so that I may not perish with my sins or fall from the blessed life. Yet I tremble and fear this present day. But if someone, neglecting the works of perfection, desires the dignity of a bishop, it is certain that such a person seeks the episcopal robe as a wolf's skin and does not desire good works. For if he desired these, he would have practiced them first in part; and having practiced them and being seized by these very works, he would have been purified. And once purified, he would not desire mere honor without action. For I affirm that the episcopal dignity is like a house being built, rising in height, soon to be completed and covered with beams and planks. Just as the one who builds a house, reaching the upper part and ascending gradually, does not uproot or break its foundations but takes great care both for them and for the construction that advances little by little, making it strong and solid so that it can bear the weight that will rest upon it—so too the one who attains the dignity of a bishop must care for the first steps as the foundations and the construction, through the works themselves and not merely by word, so that he may sing with the singers, keep vigil with those who keep vigil, read with the readers, serve with those who serve, pray with those who pray, offer the reasonable sacrifice with those who offer it, apply himself to every kind of ascetical work with those who do so, run with those who run the good race, and in this way strengthen those who do not run uncertainly. He must fight with those who fight in the contests and at all times make the foundations and the construction firmer and more stable, so that they may bear the weight of the episcopate imposed upon them, lest—like the house of the one called foolish in the Gospels, who built it on sand—the rain falls, the torrents come, and the winds blow (indicating the necessary struggles of temptations), and they beat against that house, and it falls, and its ruin is great. To

bear the virtues of the episcopate, the bishop must support his house with all these steps, as well as with cedars and tall cypresses that rise high and spread a sweet fragrance, because these steps rest upon him like beams. It is of such beams that the Bridegroom, who is Christ, says to His Bride, the Church, in the Song of Songs: "The beams of our house are cedars; our rafters are cypresses." Do you understand how the Bridegroom called this house, which is under the beams mentioned, "our house"? Have you also sought to know how great it must be, this house in which Christ comes to dwell? Is it not built and strengthened at all times by all these steps? Did not Paul send such instructions to Titus, indicating and prescribing what a bishop should be, presenting himself in all things as a model of good works? And did he not write the same things to the Corinthians, saying, "I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some"?

Let no one, hearing these words, think that I am claiming something great or grave for myself. For the words of the Apostle are confirmed by the very nature of the facts: namely, that the one who becomes a leader must perform the functions of those under him, so that he may be a model for them, teaching them how to be subject to the leader. If you please, let us leave aside the bishop for a moment and also speak of the general in our discourse. Can he convince the soldiers merely by giving them orders with words and commands to arm themselves? Or will he not convince them better if he arms himself alongside them and does what is proper to a soldier—shooting arrows, sometimes running ahead, sometimes running with them, entering simultaneously into battle against the enemies, and, to put it simply, being their companion in the ranks and sharing equally in their dangers? For if he does not do this but gives his orders with a proud and domineering spirit, using his tongue, perhaps speaking elegantly, making his words resound, but hiding his hands under his cloak, his subordinates will mock his command, envy his safe and contemptible salvation, turn away, and flee. And if they see him threatening and adding any of the manners of authority, they might even draw their swords against him instead of the barbarians, refusing to submit to empty, unmilitary pride and a boldness that does not take up arms.

How would such a leader be tolerated by the sailors or the pilot who steers the ship, or by the shipowner who sits at the prow and begins to give loud orders without touching the ropes or the rudder with them, or lifting the mast with them,

or moving about the ship, or doing all that his subordinates must do? It is certain for all that if he does not take exact care in all things, his ship will sink in the sea. And those sailors, leaving him on the deck in confusion and without any means of salvation, will entrust their own safety to the waves. One of two things will happen: either he will perish with his ship, unable to bear the loss and clinging to the profit of trade, or he too will become one of those who sail on the water, finding it agreeable to live this hopeless life and enduring frequent anguish on the sea.

After hearing these words, do you not clearly recognize that the leader must perform and fulfill the duties proper to those under him, without disdaining or despising the ranks of his subordinates, and without distancing himself from their labor as something extraordinary or foreign? Such is our state when compared and examined alongside the condition of the general and the shipowner. When I say "our state," I speak of the state of each individual rather than that of the many, of whom I am the first.

The one who, from the group of singers, is enrolled among the readers, fleeing the hymns and the nightly office as if it were a trap—does he not think he has found freedom because he lies in bed all night and says, "Now I will rest," while the snoring escapes his throat? And the one who, from the readers or singers, advances to the diaconate—does he care at all for singing or reading? Does he not hypocritically seek the functions of the diaconate merely for the sake of being clothed in a splendid tunic, adorned and resplendent in a remarkable linen garment worn over the shoulder? He forgets that this is a symbol of the wings denoting the agility, speed, and mobility of the incorporeal armies that serve. I also know many subdeacons who blush at this rank; and if it were not for their daily sustenance from the distributions, they would flee the task of lighting the lamps of the holy house as if it were a disgrace. They do not consider that those who serve kings on earth and carry lamps in their hands—even if their service is among the unnoticed and the lowly, and often aimed only at filling their stomachs—are considered fortunate and, to those outside, appear resplendent and very beautiful because they share in the honor attached to the royal house. How much greater, then, is the honor of those who serve the Creator of the universe and the King of kings—or rather, it cannot even be measured—and they will enjoy greater glory when, in

exchange for this service and their place in the Church here below, they receive another place before the Judge of all creation, in that spiritual temple, holy and marvelous in righteousness.

Concerning this, David sings in praise: "Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; they will praise You forever." And: "Blessed is the one You choose and bring near; he will dwell in Your courts." That the task of lighting the lamps of God's temple belongs no less to the small and the despised, I will clearly show from the sacred books. For it was the high priest, the first to be anointed—Aaron, the brother of Moses, clothed in the priestly robe resplendent with gold and precious stones—who was commanded to perform this service with his own hands. For in Numbers it is written: "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to Aaron and say to him: When you set up the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand.' And Aaron did so; he set up the lamps to give light in front of the lampstand, as the Lord commanded Moses." But for us, priests and bishops, the name of priest and bishop suffices, along with the throne, and we have completely forgotten to attend to our service. This example—of being known by names without action—has passed to all. Almost all men seek to seem, not to be, such. The cause of all this goes back to the head, the bishop, through whom the other members have also been corrupted. For if I were concerned with actions and not merely with names, the others would also be concerned. But now, if someone calls me "bishop" or "archbishop" or "patriarch," and removes these two syllables, I suffer as if someone were cutting off the extremities of the principal and necessary members of my body. But if I knew that desiring the dignity of a bishop means desiring good works, and that an increase in honor is an increase in labor and not a renunciation of the earlier ranks of the hierarchy, then the deacon would also know that desiring the diaconate means desiring a good work. And the same would apply to the priest, so that the honors added later and the elevation in the priestly order would not strip the one honored or deprive him of the earlier ranks.

On this matter, we must also cite the words of Paul: "We do not wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed further." For it is not because we have put on the priesthood over the previous rank that the deacon has disappeared, nor is it because the diaconate has been added that the singer has departed or the reader vanished. One person is all these, obliged to perform the work proper to each. And if this

thought—I mean the accounting and the terrible trial before the tribunal of Christ—were truly in our minds, then when honor is added to us, we would not be puffed up by names. Instead, fixing our eyes on the burden, we would drag ourselves on the ground and tremble, thinking: "What will happen to us on the day of judgment?"

What, then, shall I do? How can I not groan and weep bitterly for not having yet touched the things that belong to the prophets of the episcopate or set foot on the threshold? For how great is the power of the first word we address to the people when we cry, "Peace be with you all!" And how far I am from it! Or rather, I have not even imagined it in a dream. For each must be peaceful, showing gentleness and meekness toward his neighbor, as the sons of Jacob said to their brother Joseph: "We are peaceful men; your servants are not spies." And as the prophet David sang: "With those who hate peace, I was peaceful." And as Paul said by way of counsel or admonition: "Pursue peace with all people," and "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." The one who announces peace to the Church of God must not only be peaceful but also a peacemaker, so that he may bring peace, tranquility, and calm to the hearts of his hearers. For he represents Christ, the great high priest, according to the word of the economy: "the mediator between God and men," "who made peace through the blood of His cross," as the Apostle says, "whether things on earth or things in heaven." "Things on earth" because He united the Gentiles to Israel and made the two into one Church, calling both with equal honor. "Things in heaven" because He reconciled the heavenly Father with the entire human race, which was His adversary and rightly odious, and drew down the angels who glorify Him: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men." Therefore, showing that the peacemakers hold His place, He said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God," as if to say, "Because they will resemble Me."

How, then, am I a peacemaker? How shall I bring peace to others when I have not brought it to myself, and have not yet achieved peace between the outer and inner man—the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit opposing the flesh—without being able to conquer it, so that it is overwhelmed by the flood of pleasures, given to anger, and inclined toward passions? Where is the patriarch in this? Where is the archbishop? Let his leadership show itself in due time! Let his leadership master

the shameful passions and not be enslaved by them! Let him care for himself as a servant, just as he cares for others! You see how far I am from the title of peacemaker. This title is vast, full of divine meanings, and requires much labor and great struggles to be correctly explained. For the peacemaker is not only peaceful in word but also in conduct, in appearance, and in attitude, distinguishing true peace from false peace and striving to give peace to others. To have peaceful feelings toward everyone is not the mark of a peacemaker. How so? It is not. For not being moved or rising up sharply against the one who lives in debauchery—if this happens—but closing and turning away the eyes and tolerating harmful desires is not the mark of a peacemaker. On the contrary, it multiplies the struggle of passion and delivers the wretched one to complete corruption and perdition. But to rebuke the fallen, to prick him with healing remedies, to lead him to knowledge, to have pity on him in this way, to extinguish the fire of lust, to deliver and save him from madness, and to bring calm to his soul—this is truly the work of a peacemaker. With this thought in mind, David sang: "Let the righteous strike me in kindness and reprove me, but let not the oil of the wicked anoint my head." For mercy and peace consist in opposing the passions to cut them off, in humbling the arrogant and proud with instructive methods, and in gently—not suddenly—teaching the miser to share with the needy and showing him the spiritual profit, the kingdom of heaven.

But giving power to the passions and passing over them in silence, hiding them within, is the mark of a false peace that does not know God—the mother of war and discord, which cannot but be divided and shaken. Against such peace, David guarded himself, saying: "I was envious of the wicked when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." To this also lead the words of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, who said: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you." The peacemaker must also have a demeanor that matches his works. For favoritism or hypocrisy is enough to implant in the souls of onlookers a false appearance of combat, to make them stumble, and to lead them into the pit. For when you show a false appearance of piety with black garments, letting your beard grow, lowering your eyelids, and looking at the ground—assuming a sadness that does not exist—while coveting the goods of others and seizing them more swiftly than the wolves of Arabia, as the prophet says, and while being greedy for money—what peace will you give to those you lead? On the contrary, what war

will you not stir among them? The peacemaker must not only strive to teach fully and fittingly the doctrines of preaching concerning conduct but also skillfully resolve the apparent contradictions in the sacred books, harmonizing the Old and New Testaments like the different strings of a single lyre producing a beautiful symphony, showing that the God of both Testaments is one, and silencing the atheistic mouths of Marcion and Mani, the wretched father of the Manichaeans.

To draw out the opposing heresies—such as those of Sabellius and Arius, Eutyches and Nestorius—and lead them to the middle way of the orthodox faith from which they blindly fell—this too is the work of the peacemaker and the one who wisely unites the divided. Let Sabellius be confounded by the one essence of the Holy Trinity, vainly pretending a division of the Godhead that does not exist! Let Arius blush at the beautiful distinction of the three hypostases and, because there is one and the same essence, not bring confusion! Let Eutyches reject the fantasy of the incarnate Word, who took flesh of the same essence as ours, animated by a rational and intellectual soul, and is not divided by a duality of natures after the union! Let the one who trembles and raves in Nestorius's terrible reasonings also draw near and be reunited with the Church, seeing that God suffered in what was capable of suffering (clearly, the flesh) and yet remained impassible! These are the marks of the peacemakers. For to cry out unreasonably in ignorance, to exalt oneself with grand words, to speak like the battlements of a city, and to neglect the salvation of others without reaching out to those in error—this is not the way of the peacemaker. Because I lack all these good qualities that belong to those who stand before the gates of the episcopal dignity, I beg and implore you all to lend me your tears and prayers, so that I may not be required to give a deficient account for each one, and so that at any moment, even if delayed, I may turn my eyes to repentance and a notable conversion. For this reason, I have used these words differently with you all, because the risk concerning all of you rests on me. In doing this, you will receive the reward from on high and the kingdom of heaven. May we all attain it by the grace and love of God, the great and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be praise, glory, and power, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the good and life-giver, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

**HOMILY 100 ON THE MARTYR SAINT DROSIS. AT THE END OF THE HOMILY IS THE APOSTLE (ACCORDING TO WHOM) EACH MUST PRAY FOR WHAT HE CAN ACHIEVE. THE COVER (OF THE CIBORIUM) OF THE HOLY ALTAR.** TABLE OF CONTENTS

To those who ask the question: "What is the power of the divine word that says: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”?" it is good to show them the most valiant virgin Drosis and to refrain from speaking; for what you can see before your eyes, it is superfluous to show with the tongue. For when you see a young girl, very young—and I say young?—just emerged from childhood, born in royal purple—for she was the daughter of Trajan, who then reigned over the Romans—raised in the royal palace, already mistress of the paternal scepters as heir, adorned with all the flowers of this world, filled with all goods, even flooded with every kind of delight that seduces and troubles eager senses—(when you see such a young girl) run away from all this as if it were dust and a dream, fly above the things of this world, suddenly rise to the call of Christ and attach herself entirely to heavenly hopes and the blessed dwelling; how would you not say, not that the kingdom of heaven has approached, but rather that it is near and present? For just as it is said of those who are slaves to shameful pleasures that they are under the dominion of sin, as written by Paul to the Romans: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts” (Rom. 6:12), so too those who in their intelligence are seized by divine and heavenly thoughts, who, according to the word of the same Paul, have offered to God, as weapons of righteousness, their members and no less the operations of the soul, and who are likened, for the fulfillment of royal commands, to the heavenly armies of which the prophet David sings: “Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, you ministers who do His will” (Ps. 103:21)—even while they still live this earthly life, they make the kingdom of heaven near to them, they are under its dominion, showing conduct befitting the celestial and intellectual spirits; already they have gone and passed there, they carry it within themselves and surround it. This is what our Savior says to His disciples: “For behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21).

Indeed, that the kingdom of God and of heaven consists in this, that we will and do heavenly things and all that God wills, and that we mingle our thoughts with the divine will, is also attested by the model of prayer, great and worthy of God, which

our Savior has left us. For after saying: “Your kingdom come”, we say: “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10), making known that the kingdom of God consists in this: that, like a city well governed by laws, one is enamored and dominated by the things that please God, as if entirely subject to Him alone and submitted to His lordship, thinking of nothing foreign, so that the divine will may be equally accomplished on earth by us as it is in heaven by the armies there, and so that, even in this respect, there may be but one kingdom extending from on high to what is below and from what is below to what is on high, presenting continuity and union in docility and harmony among its members. For this, and nothing else, is the meaning of: “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”. But we must understand well that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are as different from one another as the one who reigns because he associates and the one who is received by the fact of association. For it is because of God who reigns over us, dwells in us, and is received by association that one and the same object is called and named "the kingdom of God," while it is because of those who partake and are associated by divine grace and illumination, or because of the armies in heaven, or because of us who have heavenly thoughts, that (this same object) is designated "the kingdom of heaven." And Matthew attests this by saying that our Savior said to the disciples: “Preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 10:7); and Luke (attests it) by writing that the same (Savior) commanded the same (disciples) on the same (subject): “Say to them: The kingdom of God has come near to you” (Luke 10:9).

When Drosis became part of this kingdom and tasted without satiety all the light of the divine will, when she was illuminated in herself and trampled underfoot the kingdom that drags in the dust, she utters a word that is seen and that speaks by what is seen: “Repent, for you see that the kingdom of heaven has taken hold of me and has already come among you.” For she who was mistress of the earth, of all the earth so to speak, and who reigned over it, what else could convince her to despise everything at once, if not that dwelling and that rest of the heavens? And every man, seeing this and being astonished and stupefied in his spirit, necessarily reflected and said to himself: "It is therefore true, this kingdom of heaven acknowledged by the Christians. And if even in this life they had no pledges of the hope of the beyond, if they were not illuminated by some celestial and divine light, if they were not transported in their spirit, if they did not leave the earth to be led

upward and to dwell in some way in the higher dwellings, it would not be queens who would let themselves be convinced to exchange royal purple and royal power for a simple baseless hope." What then? Must we believe Christ who, through what is seen, shows the truth of His words that are even above faith? For the fact that a young girl leaves her father's house, attracted and seduced either by the beauty of a young man, or by great riches, by happiness, by other illusions of the world and by the attraction of what charms and seduces—by which the female sex especially is easily taken—can be found equally in ancient tales and in the time that preceded us, and even in our (time) there are necessarily many bad examples of this kind.

But that the valiant Drosis arrived at voluntary labors, at an unusual religion, and at the faith of the Christians, which demands that she despise many gods who are renowned but do not exist, which teaches chastity and strength in the rest of perfection and which, because of this, is pursued, persecuted, tormented—for which of these painful and unbearable things does (the faith of the Christians) not endure from the laws, from the kings, from those who have charge of the commandments and administrations, from those who organize the assemblies of soldiers and even from the customs of the ancestors (spread) everywhere and the worship of demons which, so to speak, held the universe?—(that Drosis did this) was the work of that fire of which Christ said in the Gospels: “I came to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!” (Luke 12:49). This fire, falling into the soul of the martyr, burned and consumed all earthly and worldly thoughts like straw; and after it had enveloped and seized her entire spirit, surrounding it, like the bush that Moses saw burning without being consumed (Ex. 3:2), after it had sent up a bright flame and ascended, it lifted the young girl like a bird into the air and raised her to heaven. Henceforth entirely occupied and attached to the beauties above, she was insensible to what drew her toward the earth.

By carefully observing these facts, one certainly admires how much Christ has strengthened and fortified our nature. Eve, indeed, was the first formed, or rather (to speak like the Book), built by God; for the name of "construction" shows that the creature was something firm and solid, and that He who created her did not make her delicate, weak, or enervated, but strong like the man; she had, so to speak, the first fruits and the novelty of nature; she delighted in the divine and

happy dwelling of Paradise, free from anguish; and she freely ate of all the trees; but she was forbidden to taste the fruit of one tree, to test whether the freedom of her spirit accepted obedience. In this state, the Slanderer deceived her and persuaded her to eat contrary to the law; and when she fell through the slippery slope of pleasure, he dragged her toward the earth; and after she turned toward the flesh, he made her a slave to sin. For this cause, with Adam who had joined her in transgressing the law, she heard (it said): "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:19).

But Drosis, truly admirable, was of the same nature as we, who have grown old in sins, been trampled by the enemy demons, as David says—"I have grown old among all my enemies" (Ps. 6:7)—was weakened and languished in the works of perfection; she lived sumptuously and softly, as in Paradise, in the delights and pomp of this false, passing, and dreamlike world, while she dwelt in the royal palace of her father and saw no plant planted there that would raise her toward God or that contained a lawful pleasure. In this state, the twisted demon did not deceive her nor entangle her, he who, so to speak, skillfully ensnares all men, even those who in their heart boast of being invincible. For what was there that could struggle against a well-fortified spirit? On one side, did not the splendor and abundance of gold (fight against it), while on another side fought and attracted the brilliance and value of precious and variously colored stones, capable of corrupting and seducing even eyes that look chastely and not (only) according to their own law? On another side, did not the royal luxury of garments, the grandeur and beauty of buildings—(beauty) that from the ground rose to the roof and rivaled the flowery aspect of the fields—rise up in war against (the spirit)?

Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonians, puffed up in his spirit by such things, also once said: "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan. 4:30). And immediately at that very moment, for the pride and arrogance of his words, he was condemned to the stupidity and folly of his thoughts; so much can such things make a fortified thought fall from goodness! Shall I speak of the table on which princely dishes abounded, gathered from everywhere, from the earth and the sea, which, by their rarity and scarcity and the difficulty of finding them, increase appetite and often caress even an austere and temperate belly, much more (a belly)

that is gluttonous? Shall I enumerate the great number of attendants, the retinue and the glory that comes from every nation and race, all the service of the women's quarters and all that outside fills the imagination with astonishment and fear, the habits of the servants of tender age, the adornment, the ornaments, things that women love and seek to such a point that it would sometimes be easier for them to forget to breathe air or to drink and eat, rather than to forget them? This is also attested by the prophet Jeremiah, writing thus: “Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me days without number” (Jer. 2:32).

But Drosis did not forget, or rather (to say better) because she had known God, she no longer remembered and even forgot concerning herself that she was a woman, having closed her eyes to all sensible things, having fixed the eyes of her spirit on heaven, going entirely toward the things above, applying herself only to the things above, seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1). For this cause, she did not hear, like Eve, (it said): “You are earth, and to earth you shall return”—but: "You are heaven, and you shall ascend to heaven." For this cause also she ascended, rising like a dove on spiritual wings. When she found herself outside the royal dwellings, she made little of herself and secretly hid with the virgins who led the humble and ascetic life of monasticism and professed Christianity, then full of dangers. Being their companion in the severe life of monasticism, in pure conduct, in hope in God, and finally in the course of martyrdom, a course she completed for her soul, she said with Paul: “I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, I have obtained the crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:7-8), while she entrusted here her venerable body, this instrument of the spirit of the strong and courageous athletes and not lazy, or rather (better) prompt and lively and ready. But by her spirit, she joined to live in society with those souls who, in a manner similar to hers, fought valiantly and courageously, and by the works of perfection “left their bodies to dry like a drum skin, or caused them to die in the torments (endured) for religion; it is with these (souls), once they are joyfully delivered from the bond of the flesh—for they premeditated (and) awaited this deliverance—that spiritual leaders and angelic armies ascend together (to heaven) and sing together and, as with those who in a certain way impose crowns, they sing this hymn of victory, already designated in

few words by the prophet David, who says thus: “The princes went before, joined with the singers, in the midst of young maidens playing tambourines” (Ps. 68:25).

Why then do we ourselves, hearing this, not desire, even belatedly, at any moment, the advantages of heaven, toward which the course of rational souls and their natural march upward is directed? And on the contrary, as if we had received the soul of a pig or some animal, shall we look toward the belly and what is below it? And unreasonably, shall we forget our likeness to God? Shall we not apply ourselves to patience or to pure conduct, and shall we not have a little esteem also for virginity, for preparation for the heavenly dwellings, for this life of cohabitation with the angels, and for the greatness of the delights prepared for those who live in piety—which it is not easy, in truth, even to comprehend by intelligence? “For eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9). It is not thus that we shall celebrate the commemoration of the martyr. For the true commemoration of the martyrs consists in the imitation of their perfection. It is for this reason also that we make this (commemoration) and that, commemorating the (martyrs), we celebrate their feasts, so that by the commemoration and imitation of the patience, the courage, the hope for which “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18), we may become perfect, shake off the sleep of worldly preoccupations, learn what end the things of Christians aim at, and not be unexpectedly carried away, destitute, ugly, having no provision for salvation.

You praise, tell me, O woman, the virginity of Drosis; have real emulation for what you praise, that you may obtain Christ as a spouse; for you have heard for yourself Paul who says: “I have betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2); and: “She who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit” (1 Cor. 7:34). But you say that this is great and not easy to do correctly; especially it is not too great for souls struck by the love of God. At least take on the yoke of marriage, but keep it honorably by guarding it chastely; and if your husband has departed this world, do not stop at a second (marriage). And if you (look to) a second (marriage)—for it is permitted for the necessity of the flesh—do not let yourself go to a third, especially if you have passed in years the age of youth, and if old age or death approaches

you. For if the second (marriage) is permitted, for the third I can say nothing except that it is not permitted, because even the permission is enclosed and contained within certain limits and does not admit unrestrained cohabitation.

You praise, O excellent one, the martyr who despised royal glory and goods. Show your praise truly; give of your goods to the poor, or—what is different and of lesser merit—do not covet the things of others; but equally keep away from what has been stolen or taken unjustly; do not go with such things, lest you appear before the judge while they are in your possession, for they will be attributed to you and surround you, even if you do not wish it; and you will then desire to hide or remove them from you, and you will not be able. For the images of our actions will cling to us, without separating from us, as shadows cling to bodies.

You praise, O excellent one, the patience of the servant of Christ in the sacred struggles; let what you praise teach and instruct you, then, when the occasion demands, to endure ignominies for religion, to confess the sound faith before men, not to change with circumstances, to praise on the one hand those who have fought to the blood (Heb. 12:4), and to follow on the other hand the religion that was celebrated only by the tongue and that was praised with emphasis, and that when it was permitted.

It is by these beautiful forms of perfection and by these vows of our inner man that the valiant Drosis wishes to be crowned with praises. Why then do I speak of interior things, since no one among those who possess has been willing to give her the external and superfluous goods? For all men and all women frequently hasten to this holy temple; they make their prayers and present their requests, and, rejoicing in the help and intercession of the martyr, they obtain healings and health and various favors of every kind, which each asks to obtain. But no one pays attention to the venerable table of the holy priestly ministry, nor to the silver columns placed near it that support the dome situated above their heads, which is ugly and formless, which has been simply figured by iron bars as in a symbolic representation, but which has not been covered with silver. In truth, it is not only from the point of view of beauty, but also from the point of view of the glory adorable, as it seems to me, that (this dome) has been judged and imagined by those who built the holy churches. It represents the form of heaven, rising by

means of the arches as well as the crown to form the circular calotte above, suspended in the air and ending at its center like the navel, to show that we who perform the sacred functions under (this dome) stand within heaven like the incorporeal armies and mysteriously celebrate the holy offices. And yet no one has condescended to bring for such a pious work the offering of a pound of silver; and yet if each of those who possess even little had given only one (pound), the giver would not have noticed what he gave, while what would be collected together from each would in reality suffice, and amply, to complete the (sum) needed.

I omit, in fact, to say that even a single (faithful) could offer the whole, one of those who lie on high beds and who take their meals in silver dishes carried by many servants. What more shall I say of the women who, all going to the bath, are adorned with silver objects (weighing) many pounds, and are carried through the squares on seats equally resplendent with silver, so much so that even the bits of the mules are not devoid of it? And then if a king's daughter came to our city, and if she were here betrothed to someone for marriage, each of you, necessarily hastening to make herself more visible to the one who is to be married, would bring as a gift to the bridal chamber what would be the most precious of all golden jewels or objects of great price. But for the martyr who renounced the earthly kingdom and became the daughter of the Heavenly King and Father and became the spouse of Christ, you are lazy, you are negligent, and you hesitate to give some of your objects. But stretch out (your hand) and give joyfully and do not hold back. You will obtain rich rewards—for her spouse is neither ungrateful nor destitute—to your children He will give health, much more precious than many talents, the ease of spirit for studies, and the other things by which parents rejoice in their children. To your husband, He will equally give, with good health, the abundance of honest gains, to (your) house (and) to (your) goods the blessing and the grace from on high, and after all this, after the departure from here below, the kingdom of heaven. May we all obtain it, by the grace and mercy and love of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be praise, glory, and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 101 SERMON ON THE NATIVITY OR EPIPHANY, WHICH IS THE FIFTH (ON THIS SUBJECT). TABLE OF CONTENTS

Wishing to celebrate the object of the present feast, which is the descent from heaven to us of God the Word, His resplendent coming and His manifestation on earth—by virtue of which, because He became incarnate (taking) true flesh of the same essence as ours, He manifested Himself, appeared, and lived among men as a man, so that the disciples who served Him and lived with Him are called eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word Himself, who could not appear or be perceived by the senses—how shall I have sufficient strength to praise Him? What fitting glory shall I find, and what tongue shall declare all this? I find only a word written in the Gospels (Luke 1:2). (The angels) who hasten and strive to rise upward and rival the very deed, yet openly confess to have been surpassed by the miracle itself; for a multitude of the heavenly host and a company of angels appeared to the shepherds, and it was heard that they spoke concerning the marvel of the astonishing birth in the flesh of the uncreated Word: "Glory to God in the highest!" (Luke 2:14).

Examining the power of this word, condensed in the brevity of expression, as far as I have the strength to imagine—I, who am small and see little—and as in a drop and in shadows, I will represent and try to say how I see the spirit of the angels who uttered (this word) and what they seem to me to say at length. Seeing this glory worthy of God, of which the child born of the Virgin is the object, and wishing ourselves to celebrate and praise it, we see that the glories of the earth are poor and defective, and every human word that arises on earth falls far short of what is fitting, or rather, falls far away. Therefore, we think that this glory, which is sung in the highest by the immaterial and intellectual spirits above, is scarcely very fitting and very suitable to this mystery which is now accomplished and takes place on earth—not that offered by the orders of angels, nor yet by the archangels, nor the thrones, nor the dominions, nor the principalities, nor the powers, nor the heavenly armies, but that of the cherubim themselves, who are above every order, and of those who approach them. For this reason, indeed, (the angels) did not say: "Glory in the height" in the singular, or "in heaven," but in the plural: "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:14), showing by the superlative that this glory which is proclaimed is higher than all (others). This is the glory that Ezekiel also heard

within himself when it was sung by the cherubim, and this when he was initiated as in a vision. For he said that he heard them say: "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place!" (Ezek. 3:12). By "the place of the Lord," we must understand, because of what has been set forth, the immaterial beings who are closer to Him than the other heavenly armies and who enjoy much more of the divine society and contemplation and the intellectual and ineffable light that comes from there. For it is because of this very thing that the cherubim are also called His throne and seat, as if, by a greater and more perfect illumination, as far as possible, (God) was seated and rested upon them and always dwelt with them.

This (expression): "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place," is absolutely the same as this: "Glory to God in the highest." "Every created nature," he says, "is too inferior to glorify or bless God. But they will bless Him if they have something more fitting, preferably to all others, those who have obtained a place that is in the height and is more elevated, to such an extent that they will be called 'the place of the Lord.' And by the fact that they are associated with the divine glory and illuminated by it, they can in return give and render glory, blessing, and praise to Him who has given them the intellectual light, just as waters receiving the light of the sun also shine by reflecting the light; for in this way it happens that God Himself is glorified in some way by His own glory." Something similar is also written by the wise Paul to the Romans concerning those who had received the participation and gift of the Holy Spirit and were praying, when he says: "The Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26). And the angels who appeared to the shepherds, having seen the inexpressible glory of Emmanuel, judging as paltry and blaming, so to speak, all praise and glory and word that is found among men, turned their gaze toward the armies that are in the height, and there again, having turned their gaze above all others, they ascended in haste toward what is, one might say, the summit and head of the orders that serve and are blessed. They judged that the greatest glorification of all was something small and, as if they were in need after everything had been exhausted and finished for them, they cried out what they had found: "Glory to God in the highest!" It is by opposite ways that He comes who is high and charitable by nature; He descends below His essence to the extent that He knew we had need, we who needed to be saved. And having charged the prophet Isaiah to foretell the mystery of the incarnation, which is above all understanding and word,

He said to him: "Take for yourself a large new scroll and write in it with human writing: 'Hasten to divide the spoil, for it is near'" (Isa. 8:1).

It is very fittingly that He gave the name "new scroll" to the Gospel, which was clearly written and preached beforehand by the Prophets, which is always young and never grows old, like the letter of the Law written on tablets, which has fallen into disuse. "The scroll," he says, "is great"; for how could it not be great, this (Gospel) which announces such a reality? Great and worthy of admiration; for truly, according to the word of Paul: "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16). And it is great in another way, that which brings perfect teachings, not as to children, but as to those who are great in intellectual age, by whom we have clearly heard: "It was said to the ancients: 'You shall not kill'; but I say to you: Do not be angry with your neighbor in vain. It was also said: 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you: Do not even look at her whom you covet. Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28, 48). But this scroll, which is so great, He nevertheless commanded the prophet to write with human writing; He said, as it were: "Do not fear, O man, not even considering the divinity and incorruptibility of the mystery and striving to attain what is adequate to the reality; inasmuch as you must speak of God, you seek divine words and expressions without finding them, and it is necessarily reluctantly that you will write; I command you to write with letters and with human words," arranging even this in a very fitting and very charitable manner. For if the Word of God descended to become man without ceasing to be God, how would He disdain that what concerns Him should be written and proclaimed with human letters? For He whom the incarnation has neither changed, nor altered, nor diminished, how should He be diminished by the writing or the utterance of human speech, which brings us the salutary preaching of the Gospel? This is what the angels themselves attest, who, as I said above, saw a child lying in a manger and addressed to Him the glory that is in the highest.

And why does He not say "book," but scroll? Because neither the choir of the Prophets, nor the crowd of the Evangelists or the Apostles, is capable of comprehending and declaring all the reality of this sublimity worthy of God or the words of the incarnation, except in small part and insofar as one might touch only with the fingertips and take but a very small fragment. For this cause, John, the son

of thunder, who more than any other engaged in theology and was enlightened in his understanding, and who, in a most sublime manner, wrote what pertains to the incarnation, at the conclusion of the writing of (his) Gospel, also said: "There are also many other things that Jesus did; if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25). He said this not only when he showed the quantity of what Jesus did, since He was the Word who existed before the ages and the power that governed all that came into existence—for this reason He said: "My Father works until now, and I also work" (John 5:17)—but also when He makes known its greatness, which the ear of those who live in the world was not capable of perceiving. For all this has been revealed and written only insofar as it was comprehensible to us. And one might say—and rightly so—that even all the inspired Books of God, in comparison with all divine knowledge, hold only the place of some scroll and a small part of the whole book. It seems indeed that our Savior Himself foretold this by the prophet of the Psalms and made known beforehand His coming in the flesh, as well as the rejection of the ancient and figurative service with burnt offerings, and His renewal through the exercise of the spiritual and true priesthood of His holy body. And He said to His Father: "You did not desire sacrifice or offering, but You have prepared a body for Me. You did not accept burnt offerings or sin offerings. Then I said: Behold, I come; it is written of Me at the head of the book" (Ps. 40:6-7; Heb. 10:5-7).

The words: "You have prepared a body for Me," signify this: "The sacrifices and burnt offerings," He says, "which were performed according to the Law, You have abolished, O Father, because of their figurative and imperfect character, and in their place You have inaugurated the coming of My incarnation, which is more mysterious than all, and the exercise of the priesthood of My body, which is perfect and lacks nothing, because it possesses the remission of sins and complete purification, which the Law could not accomplish. These things, from the beginning, are written and foretold concerning Me at the head of the book, that is, in a chapter and a section," calling "the head of the book" all the Books that prophesied concerning Him, because all equally, and not only one, prophesied His coming in the flesh. Therefore, Luke also wrote that, after He rose from the dead, He appeared to men walking on the road, and "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself"

(Luke 24:27). Yet by "all the Scriptures" He designated a small section of the book and a chapter, in comparison with the whole book of divine knowledge, which in truth is known only to Christ alone, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3), as Paul wrote to the Colossians. For of these treasures, only a portion has descended to us, which can be compared to a chapter and a scroll, and this (portion) is not grasped by everyone, but more by some, less by others, according as it belongs to each by reason of his preparation and purification for contemplation. John the Evangelist also saw in the Apocalypse that this book of perfect knowledge was written within and without and sealed with seven seals, which signify the perfection of the secret. He says concerning it: "And no one in heaven, nor on earth, nor under the earth, was able to open the book or to look at it, except the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, who has prevailed" (Rev. 5:1-5). And that One is the Christ, concerning whom the patriarch Jacob said in prophesying: "Judah is a young lion; you have crouched down, you have slept like a lion" (Gen. 49:9). It is because of (His) kingship that he gives Him the name of lion; and He Himself, in truth, after having completely bent His knees, lain down, and slept the sleep (He slept) for us and died, showed by His resurrection that He has reigned and prevailed over death, which had reigned over the universe. For his part, Paul wrote to the Hebrews in these terms: "For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah" (Heb. 7:14). It is He who has opened for us the book of knowledge that was completely closed, of which only one scroll has descended to men. For we acknowledge only Him, as well as those who, like Isaiah, were charged, besides writing and speaking, to show also to others what was in this (scroll). For this reason, he also heard: "Take for yourself a large new scroll." Some copies have: "Take for yourself a scroll of the large (work) new." By this, it is clearly shown that he speaks of the large (work) new, of the mystery that was to be written in this scroll, for which he also called the scroll new and large. For it is well known that every scroll in which one must write is generally new and unwritten; (it follows) from this that, if any of the Prophets also receives the order to write in a book, it is on the one hand a book in relation to us who know nothing and have no part at all in divine things, and on the other hand a scroll in relation to the superior book.

But let us see what Isaiah says after these (words): "And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son" (Isa. 8:3). He calls "prophetess" the Mother of

God, the Virgin, who prophesied by divine purpose in saluting Elizabeth: "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:48), and what follows. I often wonder greatly how the prophet, having heard: "Take for yourself a large new scroll," did not say: "And I took the scroll," but: "I went to the prophetess," leading us up to a great thought, and (teaching us) that the new scroll is the prophetess, the Mother of God, the Virgin. And how? I will explain. God formed Adam from the earth; then, after cutting one of his ribs, removing it, and replacing it with flesh, as it is written, He created Eve. The woman, therefore, is a section of the man, that is, a scroll. Consequently, since Eve, the first scroll, grew old because of sin, once she was condemned to bear children in sorrow, it is from the viewpoint of healing that the Mother of God, the new scroll, was considered, after she had been purified by the Holy Spirit and there was found in her nothing of what is old and is the penalty of sin. She served for the divine childbearing in a manner admirable, new, and worthy of God, she is a scroll both new and admirable, and doubly new. On the one hand, God the Word took from her flesh endowed with an intellectual soul and united it to Himself hypostatically, since the (flesh) subsisted at the very moment it was united; for it did not subsist before the union, so that it is He who became incarnate without change and without division who is thus regarded as having been conceived and born, and not another man apart from Him. And on the other hand, (He received this flesh) not from human seed, but from the Holy Spirit, who, apart from all concupiscence, effected this conception in a creative and divine manner, while this (conception) was written in the scroll with human writing, according to the prophetic revelation, that is, while this divine conception is depicted, represented, and figured in a human manner, and it awaited that it should grow little by little and develop, so that the days when she was to give birth were fulfilled (Luke 2:6), as the sacred Book says, for her who conceived in a manner worthy of God and gave birth in a manner even more worthy of God, because she is at once both mother and virgin.

It is through all these states that are proper to us, and omitting none, that the physician and savior came, having become like us in all things, as it is written, except in sin (Heb. 4:15), so that in all the (conditions) in which we are, He might provide for us salvation and healing. In certain books, therefore, it is written: "And I went to the prophetess"; and in others: "And he went to the prophetess." The word: "I went," indicates that it is Isaiah who approaches the contemplation and

revelation of the prophecy, while the other (word): "He went," shows that it is He who said to him: "Take for yourself a large new scroll." And this One was the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, who speaks by the Prophets, who approached the Virgin, according to that word which says in the Gospels: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you" (Luke 1:35); that is why (Isaiah) also adds afterward: "And she conceived and bore a son," to show that the conception was from the Holy Spirit Himself. It is most truly and properly and aptly written: "She bore a son," for this was the whole aim of the economy. For Eve, the old scroll, after bearing Cain, said: "I have acquired a man" (Gen. 4:1), and not "a son." From this (it follows) that we were henceforth born as men and not as sons, because sin was master and powerful and estranged us from kinship with God. But the new scroll, that is, the Mother of God, bore a son. For it was necessary for us, and we had need of the Son who is God by nature, who gives us the grace of adoption of which we had been deprived.

How do they not blush, hearing this, the young of the crows of Nestorius, for his doctrines are crows that are unclean and, as far as they are concerned, obscure the light of the knowledge of God? For He who by nature is God of God, and the same who, according to the flesh, was born as a Son, they affirm that He acquired by grace the fullness of adoption by virtue of His baptism in the Jordan. How, then, would He give me as a gift that which He Himself enriched (only) by grace? Consequently, He will first be ranged with those who are well treated and not with those who are benefactors: our Savior will be saved with us; and what confirmation will the divine words receive that say: "Today is born to you a Savior, who will save His people from their sins" (Luke 2:11; Matt. 1:21)? For He who was born as Son and Savior does not need another addition to be perfect; and moreover, the (act of) saving is not for Him a quality that is acquired or added, but which is in Him by essence. Why (do they not blush), those who profess the imagination of Eutyches, which is a law unto itself, and regard as law what seems good to them? On the one hand, the denial of the truth is common to them, and on the other, they are divided into a multitude of sects of false belief, as each can show. And although they are people who are in error, even in this error they boast of having no chief and of obeying none of the masters of theology and the interpreters of the mysteries of the Church. They are much less reasonable than the locusts, which have no king (Prov. 30:27), according to the proverb; if one examines them, they speak in good order at a single command, while they, on the contrary, explain their imagination, some in

one way and others in another, as it comes to their mind and like interpreters of dreams who float. Will they not blush at the new scroll, I mean the Mother of God, the Virgin, who was separated from our race and chosen as a holy temple, so to speak, for the ministry and accomplishment of the economy that takes place for us, (this Virgin) from whom sprang Emmanuel? Do they not hasten to Adam and Eve, the first parents, because of whom we remained in need of the healing that took place through the incarnation and humanization? And do they not clearly recognize that what was to be healed was taken? For if (Christ) did not truly will to pass through the limits of our nature, and this when He came even into these (limits) while remaining above nature, so that, according to the word of Paul: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12); and: "By the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of one man many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19); and: "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:21)—why was all this cycle of the incarnation necessary? (Why was it necessary) that He showed with deceit this difficult and prolonged imagination? (Why was it necessary) that He passed through conception and birth and the other (states), which in truth had to be shown as in hallucinations, by means of things that are unbelievable, or rather by means of things that cannot be; for the usage of nature presents a demonstration of the truth and not of imagination?

Knowing these things, therefore, know clearly that you kick against the goads (Acts 9:5), as it is written, and be an excellent portion, or rather (be) the portion of God Himself. For it is well also said of you: "The Lord's portion is His people Jacob, and Israel the lot of His inheritance" (Deut. 32:9); for "their gods are not as our God" (Deut. 32:31). I weave for you also this from the same book; for the enemies of the truth are without understanding, and the vine of their doctrine comes from the vine of Sodom, upon which the clouds of the Lord did not pour rain, but fire and brimstone, when they descended upon it (Deut. 32:32; Ezek. 38:22; Gen. 19:24); and the reproaches that are borrowed from the inspired Book of God, they render them without sons and mothers of fruits not perfect and untimely. By how many mouths, O my brethren, could we glorify as is fitting Christ, who has given us the orthodox confession of faith and delivered us from all heretical darkness? What offering shall we bring to the new scroll of the great mystery? What? This: that we ourselves also be new scrolls, separated from all evil

love and fellowship, and, as far as possible, wholly united to God, having His holy laws written at all times in our hearts and sealed by good works, with all (our) strength and application, because we desire to ascend to the height from which Christ descended. For it is there that this word draws and likewise lifts us up: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men" (Luke 2:14). To Him be praise in the ages of ages. Amen!

**HOMILY 102 ON THE GREAT DOCTOR OF TRUTH BASIL, AND GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN (θεολόγος). TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Moses, the minister of God, who received the testimony that he was "faithful in all his house" and that he could "guide with justice the words" entrusted to him, having received the Law (νόμος) written on the tablets limited to the ten commandments which contained what should not be done and what should be done, so that none of the actions in the world fall outside their legislation (νομοθεσία), but so that everything is contained in the few divine words: — (Moses), descending from the summit of Mount Sinai, presented this (Law) before Israel and promulgated it to them. And after the journey (in the desert) for forty years with his instructions and teachings, as he was now somewhere on the banks of the Jordan, he thought he received from God the impulse to develop the commandments of the Law, to manifest a part of the richness of the Spirit hidden in the letter, and to bring forth, as from a noble womb, a perfect child (come) in its time. It was necessary, indeed, it was fitting that this be after the Law had approached the Jordan, that it be explained and appear spiritual. Paul, having this in view, also said: "For we know that the Law is spiritual".

After completing this developed and extended exposition and this teaching of the Law, Moses called the book "repetition of the Law" (Deuteronomy); breaking into small pieces and reducing to crumbs these ten maxims of the Law, as if it were bread, he abundantly fed the listener, and shows that the reading of this (book) is no less profitable for leaders than for those under a leader, saying thus: "And when he sits on his command, he shall write for himself in a book this repetition of the Law with the priests of the tribe of Levi; and let it be with him, and let him read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to observe all his commandments and to put these precepts into practice, so that his heart does not rise above his brothers, and that he does not turn away from the commandments neither to the right nor to the left". This is what Moses says in general when he commands all leaders. But for bishops, the Law is, on one hand, the commandment of Paul, which is briefly limited to a few words indicating numerous and important meanings, and says: "It is necessary that the bishop be irreproachable, the husband of one wife, vigilant, pure, modest, hospitable, capable of teaching", and (the rest) that goes with this. On the other hand, there is a repetition of the Law in the

conduct and word of Basil and Gregory, (word) which greatly extended and developed, as far as possible, the meaning of the sacred Law by the facts themselves, and which is placed for their instruction and guidance before all who wish to learn. It was therefore necessary, according to the warning of the great Moses, that every bishop, when he sits on (the throne of) his command, write for himself this repetition of the episcopal Law, so that it may be with him and that he may read it for himself all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God (and) to observe all his commandments, so that his heart does not rise above his brothers, and that he does not turn away from the commandments neither to the right nor to the left.

But I, fearing the copy of this repetition of the Law placed before me, and seeing that my conduct fights and struggles against this legislation (visible), I turn my eyes away from the example of these sacred teachings, and I find it pleasant today to polish and sharpen myself only, as with a whetstone, with the venerable commemoration of these holy men, and to erase and cast far from me a part of the rust of sin which is old, which gnaws and consumes little by little and secretly. “For if I walked in similar (paths) and possessed this "Law," a two-edged sword proper to them, which cuts the passions of the flesh, thanks to active virtues, and which, by the word of the spirit, passes into teaching and penetrates material and very coarse souls without causing them pain, my (conduct) being in contact with their (conduct) could accomplish the letter of the Proverbs, and, in the end, procure me an advantage; for it is written: Iron sharpens iron!” On the contrary, while I run the risk, as I said, of being consumed and destroyed by the rust of sin, these Fathers whose commemoration we celebrate will perform the office of the whetstone, (these Fathers) towards whom I draw, so to speak, as with ropes, my oppressed and unhappy soul, which does not even consent to commemorate them because of the reproach (it deserves), but which crawls on the earth, hides, trembles as if fleeing from the works of perfection, and fears to do some good by chance and even blushing.

And I say to it this: “Why do you go away and finish these good examples, O you, fearful and unhappy? Come, let us go towards these statues of religion, on the day of their commemoration, as in a venerated and splendid feast, let us be filled with zeal for some of their beautiful actions, and desire their similar riches, so that we

may be the possession of God; for all men are the creation of the one who made them, but there are only a few who are his possession, and these are those who in deed and word know nothing else but God and are not enslaved to dishonorable passions." This is what Isaiah also said in his prayer: "Lord, our God, possess us; Lord, apart from you we know no other (god); we celebrate your name!" Difficult, on one hand, are the works and fatigues of perfection, especially those which are determined and ordered by the priesthood and the pastoral charge of reasonable sheep and those (still) which it is impossible to enumerate; but on the other hand, thanks to these zealous and illustrious figures who have perfected them, (these rules of perfection) push to imitate them those who are negligent and lazy. It is necessary therefore that by our spirit we run towards them, and that we put ourselves zealously in the footsteps of those who with science have pastured the flock of the Lord, these valiant combatants of sacred struggles, who aspired to suffer for Christ, who learned, from those who had fought, what it means: I spoke in your martyrs before kings, and I was not ashamed", and that he who carries divine words in his mouth must have the energy of the martyrs and be ready to suffer. For this reason the prophet gave the name of "martyrs" to divine words, and not so that we proclaim and exalt with the tongue only an orthodoxy devoid of (all) risk, and that we be modestly clothed with a false mask of partiality and hypocrisy, that we traffic the word of truth, and that we say this and keep that under the teeth, that we be enslaved to occasions, that we live a life of a hare, and that we fear and tremble, lest, by chance, someone of our neighbors notice our orthodoxy, that we run risks and that, for this reason, we observe which way affairs lean. You, O my soul, sick with these (illnesses), hasten towards the doctors, (towards) the images of Basil and Gregory which, by forgetfulness and negligence, are erased in you; today still represent them anew in yourself; do not distance yourself from their divine figures; resemble them with all your strength as much as one can attain their resemblance. For if now you do not fix them in your voluntary spirit, (so that they are) immutable and unshakable, you will see them, against your will, in sadness and in the pain of the heart, erected before you, not to be initiated, but to accuse, on the day of judgment, and you will suffer from their part condemnations.

For, in truth, he who terribly threatened by the prophet Ezekiel, saying: I will judge between sheep and sheep and between ram and ram", will examine you and ask you in the presence of these powerful rams what (profit) you have drawn from

having become the leader of such a flock, and from being proud of the patriarchal throne; and he will tell you how Gregory, who was at the head of the small town of Nazianze, while he was bent under the weight of extreme old age and white hair, and needed a stick, was nevertheless afflicted and overwhelmed by the cares of all the churches; (how), of his own will, he went to the imperial city; (how) voluntarily he mingled with adversaries, overthrowing, for a period of ten years, the designs full of tricks and quarrels of the heretics, and showing in his purity the noble beauty of truth; (how) because of this he was dragged (before tribunals), while he was struck and stones were thrown at him, and while he thought and said and wrote with Paul this (word): Every day I die. But you, you slept all the time of your life, spreading yourself in honors and complacent in the throne; you made little of the insults (thrown) against me, and you did not dare to move your feet outside the threshold, as they say, and if perhaps you moved your foot, at least you did not move the tongue which remained inside the teeth without daring and without moving in circumstances which demanded frankness (of language); or else, if it moved, it was not (to say) profitable things, but (things) such (that it would have been more useful if it had not moved. Hearing these things, O my soul, when the judgment takes place — and they will be said by the judge and God in the presence of all reasonable creation — what will happen to you? Where will you drag yourself and hide? How will you bear to hear these (words), you who cannot bear to be compared and to have erected before you the figure and the valiant and gigantic strength of the great Basil, with which he spoke to Valens enraged for the things of Arius, and to Modeste his governor? With the word, he offered his neck to the sword; and, having received the order to remain in exile, he equally set out promptly by himself, paying no attention to the one who threatened and terrified with daily terrors, but (well) to the one who gave this law: When they persecute you in this city, flee to the other.

The violence of the movement, “a sin which has no witness and is not revealed and which (remains) unknown to all men, until he comes who knows the secrets of darkness and who manifests the thoughts of hearts!” For it suits me to use the very words of Basil, since it is not possible in truth that we show and express his own (thoughts) except by his own (words). From there he was equally revered by all who were part of his flock and by all who practiced philosophy and devoted themselves to monastic life, not only men but also women, answering them as a

doctor, as a writer, as a teacher, as a father, to the point that his own answers, being like revelations and precepts of God, leave absolutely nothing without healing, but they are a whole code of salvation; and the fact of turning away and diverting from them a little, even for what seems just, constitutes a manifest danger and a slippery slope leading to the pit. As for those who lived in the world and were struggling with affairs, by frequently addressing them, he warned them and taught them not to be surprised by the flow of matter, but to surpass by running what passes by running and to apply themselves to future and lasting things. The fact accompanied the word: those who were rich relieved themselves of the weight of their burden, and, well dismissed, they left the world in all security; and those who were hungry were fed. Thus, at a time when famine once struck the land of Cappadocia and when all (inhabitants), and especially the poor, suffered from hunger and perished, he opened his mouth for (pronouncing) the word of God, according to the precept which is in Proverbs, and immediately the granaries of those who traded in wheat opened, (granaries) on which was the lock that cannot be broken, namely that of avarice, which only opened and obeyed the hand full of gold, and which did not respond if there was no money; and then the wheat, abundantly spread throughout the country, flowed like springs and no one lacked food. But here is for (Basil).

As for Ignatius clothed with God, who walked on greater heights and this as a martyr, he instructed not only his own flock; but, when he went in all haste to the city of Rome, and (this) for the struggles of martyrdom, or rather to the superior city of Jerusalem, he still wrote by letters to those who had seen him passing what seemed to him (appropriate), and his commandments were an immutable law; for the words of the saints act and make act. And I, because I have not exercised my soul by active works, do not convince my listeners. That is why, when I had previously spoken to you of a small gift of a little money which could only suffice to cover the destitution and nudity of the venerable table in one of the holy churches — and what (goal) could one imagine more appropriate than this or more revered and venerable? — I could not convince you well. But some listened and praised my word, waving their hand and giving the gift of a praising tongue; others, by some small gift, hypocritically showed love for my friendship; for if they had thought that they gave to God, necessarily they would have considered small what (to them) seems great. A greater number immediately invoked the example of the widow who was approved and praised for the offering of only two

quarters of an as, without knowing that by them she had given all her fortune since she lived in mendicity; and those, imitating (this) small quantity (taken) from the great superfluity they have, ignore how far they remain behind and hold themselves distant from the intention of this praiseworthy woman.

And how does this not relate to misery and not give rise to a great accusation, since Moses, in the beginnings of the knowledge of God, while, as in figure, he occupied himself with what was not yet completed, gave the commandment to make offerings for the construction of the tabernacle to difficult people among those who had brought from Egypt a coarse spirit; and the abundance of offerings flowed like a torrent, either from those who only gave, or from those who also executed the works with them, to the point that even those who received (the offerings) said what is written: “The people bring much more than is necessary for the works that the Lord has commanded to do”. But we, who are the ministers of grace and of the Testament that never grows old, addressing you who have received adoption, who are heirs of God and coheirs of Christ, who are not on the way to the Promised Land, but hastening to heaven itself, because the resurrection and the future life, happy and immaterial, are present in a short time, shall we be so pusillanimous and, even less, shall we behave as if there were no hope that something good would be returned to those who give generously? O lack of faith! O poverty of my words! It is the work of the commemoration of (these) saints to come to the aid (of this lack of faith) and to perfect what is lacking, and I am not ashamed to solemnize my blame because of them. For to be blamed in the present life procures an advantage, while to be blamed in the future life causes damage and inconsolable misfortune. May we be delivered from it by the grace and charity of our great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom belong praise and power, as well as to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and for the ages of ages. Amen!

**HOMILY 103 ON THE EPIPHANY, WHICH IS THE FIFTH (ON THIS SUBJECT).** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

After having spoken to you many times about this feast and, according to the limited means at my disposal, shared the philosophical reflections (“μουσική”) that came to my mind, and having exhausted, so to speak, all the “μουσική” or resources of my poverty—if one can speak of the resources of poverty—I wanted to remain silent without reproaching the bond of indigence on my lips, and I do not know how the voice of the one crying in the desert now moves my tongue; the herald and precursor of God the Word causes speech to run ahead of the lingering intelligence; once again, John himself prepares the way even for intelligences, he who is sent as an angel before the face (“πρόσωπον”) of the Lord to establish in advance and prepare the path of our salvation. I see that the Jordan itself rolls waves of light rather than (“ὕδωρ”) water and rises in surges of knowledge, without me knowing how to bear this light; and it is fitting that I cry out the words of the centurion: “I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof”. For, if I had enlarged myself through the rectitude of the divine precept—indeed, as it is written, “his precept is very broad”—if I could open wide the mouth of my intelligence and draw in the Spirit, and if I were the city set on a mountain, it would necessarily be that the currents of the river that I receive within me would gladden the city of God, as the prophet David sings somewhere (“ποῦ”).

How could such a river of light, entering a very narrow, dirty, and dark little house, not obscure and extinguish, by its great brilliance, eyes filled with much mud? Or even flood, tear away, and uproot everything? Therefore, the presence of mere moisture and a single small drop will suffice to illuminate my entire little house, to the point that it will seem made of light, the mud coating now hidden, because it will be illuminated on all sides. But, while I turn away my mind and depart, finding myself unequal to the height of the Jordan’s rising waves, I see that Jesus himself is baptized there, he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit and in fire; I rise with the divine flame through an ascension that soars upward, I am entirely like a bird, and below I see the very light that a moment ago seemed high to me, after I have ascended to the one who was for me the cause of this elevation, who gives the spirit, who is above all principality and power and virtue and dominion, and every name that can be named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. For it is

the nature of the spirit and fire to rise upward, and of water to flow downward to deep places and to gush into a deep and low place. But, because it belongs to the superior element to conquer, the water also rose once it mingled with the fire. And the spirit; while it flows downward, it gives birth above; and of those who are born, it makes sons of the Most High, because of the one who came from above and from heaven, descended to it, was baptized, and gave it all these divine and sublime qualities.

But I do not know how, I myself, after having been "turned upward to this height by speech, and having risen with the sublimity of the divinity as much as possible, suddenly I descended into the depth of the economy, and I saw the one who is beyond all descend to the water and be baptized. But, because it is the same who, on the one hand, eternally and without beginning, that is, outside of time, was begotten by God the Father, as he is the splendor of glory and the image of the substance of the one who begot him, and who, on the other hand, also participated in our essence ("οὐσία") at the end of time through birth, and participated in the same way as we in blood and flesh, as Paul said, and in flesh not devoid of an intellectual soul, so that he fully receives our likeness, lacking only sin, while he holds from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin what is fitting to God and what is excellent; for this reason, since the Emmanuel is one of two natures, without confusion, namely the only hypostasis and the incarnate nature of God the Word, it necessarily follows that the speech referring to him and its meaning are also one and indivisible, and that what is below is united with what is above. And, even if you run upward, and this so that you may speak of God the Word, you will understand that he became man, and, without knowing it, you will descend, unnoticed, into the depths of charity ("φιλανθρωπία") and marvel at the miracle. And even if you descend in your mind with the measures of annihilation, on the one hand you will not reach the bottom, for you will not comprehend how far he descended; and, on the other hand, you will be lifted upward, like those who bathe in the sea, as if pushed by the water, and in taking the man you will necessarily find that the same is God. Even if he voluntarily made himself poor in a lower condition, you will find that he is superior; he is capable of taking human things, because in truth he became man without change, and he is not susceptible to being dominated by any of them, because he is God who was inaccessible to them even before the incarnation.

For, by the fact that he became incarnate, by that very fact he accepted suffering all human things, without removing or diminishing anything of what was in him by essence (“οὐσία”). Why, indeed, would he distance himself from being God? Let them therefore be torn apart and annihilated, those who divide this same Christ by the duality of natures after the union, as well as those who outwardly (“φαινομένως”) held orthodox opinions and those who spoke these things out of partiality (“προσωπολημψία”) and hypocrisy! For such individuals will be cut into two pieces on the terrible day of judgment, as the certain word (“ἀσφαλής”) of our Savior wills, which says: “His master will come and cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the hypocrites”. How, then, could we be charitable toward these hypocrites? Or how could we not excommunicate and expel those who, as far as they are concerned, have cut in two this one, our Lord and our God Jesus Christ? Or, while we do not tolerate insults against ourselves, for what reason would we forgive these insulters of the divinity? They took as a pretext the lack of dignity (“ταπείνωσις”) accepted to help us, by the one who voluntarily annihilated himself, to destroy the great and insoluble mystery of the incarnation; they assigned and attributed to the human nature what pertains to healing and charitable condescension; they made the physician a stranger, who, out of pity, leaned down from on high upon those who were sick; who, while he is not susceptible to division and cutting and is in no way subject to the blasphemous cutting of those people, also came to the edge of the Jordan; who, having accepted for himself, as man, the baptism of John by water, placed in this very baptism, as God, our own purification which takes place by fire and the Holy Spirit; who mingles with the sensible water the intellectual source of life, in whose light we have seen the light, when we saw in it, as in a mirror, the unique essence (“οὐσία”) and divinity of the Father and the Holy Spirit; who, as man, bows his head to the Baptist, and the same, as God, hears the words: “I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me”; and who replies: “Let it be so now”—preventing what is very distant and outside the words fitting to the economy, namely that the greatness of his divinity be manifested among us. The things thus composed and united in a manner conforming both to divinity and to the economy, since the same was truly God and man, who then would dare to divide them between the two natures in a blasphemous and ignorant manner?

But—O wonder! O depth of the economy, incomprehensible and illuminating all sides by the abundance of charity (“φιλανθρωπία”)!—John called the children of vipères those who came to baptism, because they had fallen into the bitterness of venomous reptiles and had already come to the nature of wild beasts. And Jesus, who knows no sin, came to the water’s edge as one of them, he to whom David said, looking at him from the beginning with prophetic eyes: “You who crushed the heads of the dragons on the water, you who shattered the heads of the dragon”. For the dragon, the ancient chief and the serpent, the Slanderer who drove Adam from Paradise, and the demons beneath him, who are also rightly called dragons, as they share with him one and the same will, who have many heads, equal in number to the passions, and who exercised their dominion over the moisture of human life, as well as over the sea, and, in a way, changed human nature into their own wickedness, showed us serpents and children of vipères, and not men as we are, but what we became when we fell sick with sin. It is for this that Jesus comes into the world, while he fills it as God, and enters it as man; it is for this that he came to the edge of the Jordan River, so that he might kill the various heads (“πολυκεφαλής”) of wickedness, and so that we might no longer be their children; but he himself, since he is the only head and the only principle of the Church, will show us children of a single head by the divine bath of regeneration, no longer varied as children of many heads, but simple and true as children of one head.

In showing this, Paul wrote to the Galatians: “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus”. And in the Gospels (“Εὐαγγέλια”), our Savior also says to his Father concerning those who believe in him: “That they may also be one in us”. For he who is in advance and the precursor of the Word, crying out the words previously spoken by Isaiah, also made known in advance that through baptism Jesus calls to one and the same honor, and he said: “Every valley shall be filled, every mountain and hill shall be made low, the crooked shall be made straight, the rough ways shall be made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God”. For all that was of a proud and haughty spirit, and resembled a hill or a mountain, the Gospel (“Εὐαγγέλιον”) has made level, teaching and instructing moderation of thought; and every depression and what lies in the depth of ignorance of God, resembling a valley, has been filled by the equal vocation in every respect, by

teaching and by knowledge, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah which says: “And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest”. But truly, the crooked things have also been made straight, because all who have been called have chosen for themselves, instead of crookedness, the straightness of truth. And this would not have happened if, as Isaiah predicted, the Lord had not wielded the sword against the crooked serpent, the dragon, who has many heads, who was the first to conceive (“νοήσει”) varied wickedness and is the father of crookedness. He calls "sword" the power of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus brought down upon the water, which crushed the heads of the dragon, which even now the priests still bring down in its efficacy through his charity (“φιλανθρωπία”) by the word of God and prayer. Paul testifies to this, saying: “And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”. The dragon, therefore, fearing this sword, does not endure being cut but flees and becomes a fugitive. From this it follows that the rough ways have also been made smooth. For the apostolic word sought out and smoothed the souls of the nations, which could not be trampled or reached and which had been hardened by the worship of demons; and this not by its own power, but because “all flesh has seen the salvation of God”, that is, God who has clearly come to save and has shown by the very works that he is the Savior.

How, then, having obtained this, are we toward one another like crooked, bitter, hard, deceitful people, envious, inventing injustices against one another, dragging before tribunals even those who owe nothing, delivering them to chains and stripping them of their possessions to the point of leaving them naked? I remain silent about tongues that accuse their neighbors in vain, and I pass quickly over those who take pleasure in drinking slander and insults like milk, and who do not know that they fill ears with burning coals. What shall I say of those who, so to speak, do not agree with themselves? They are sometimes peaceful and sometimes harsh, yesterday flatterers and today proud; one day they smile and another they are difficult to approach and hard; they rejoice and grieve without reason; they hypocritically display voluntary poverty and pursue avarice (“πλεονεξία”); they deceitfully feign purity and are impure in spirit; they chase after vain glory and praise moderation with their words; they take great care of their clothing and beard, lowering their forehead and, in general, tempering frivolities with gentle movements and regulating their gait, but they pay no attention to the disordered

movements and passions of the soul and its shameful and despicable rags. Shall I add those who are now in church and then go to the folly of horse races and the theaters (“θέατρον”) of softness, like those of the harshness and cruelty of wild beasts—all things that divide into contrary passions and pull this way and that, tearing apart the wretched soul of man? Shall I mention the psalms and debauched songs, prayer and blasphemy, groans and unrestrained laughter that bubble up like a pot on the fire? These varied and diverse malice belong to that crooked and tortuous serpent; they are the children of his many heads that Jesus, the great God, crushed and shattered on the water. Let us flee, then, from these heads, fix our eyes on the nobility (“εὐγένεια”) of this single head from which we are spiritually born, and pursue the unity and simplicity of truth. You see how a single small drop from the waves of the Jordan has flooded, watered, and illuminated my dry, moistureless, and dark little house, so that, to the extent we understand, we may again set this table before you; by truly enlarging it among you in turn, you will cause abundant light to dwell in your souls and obtain the kingdom of heaven; may we all obtain it by the grace and charity (“φιλανθρωπία”) of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be praise, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the good and life-giving one, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

**HOMILY 104 THE VERSE THAT IS FOUND IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, WHICH SAYS: "THEN THE PHARISEES WENT AND TOOK COUNSEL AGAINST HIM, HOW THEY MIGHT ENTANGLE HIM IN HIS WORDS." AND THEY SENT THEIR DISCIPLES TO HIM WITH THE HERODIANS, ETC." AND CONCERNING THE REST: "AS FOR THOSE WHO PREACH ANOTHER GOSPEL THAN THE ONE WE HAVE RECEIVED, LET THEM BE ANATHEMA", ACCORDING TO THE LEGISLATION OF THE APOSTLE, EVEN IF THEY ARE IN GREAT NUMBER.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Would you like us to go to the crater of Wisdom, full of what we have just read, to draw spiritual teaching, as much as we can measure with a small cup that will suffice to intoxicate our smallness, as the wise Paul said? And what was done at the time of the Incarnation of our Savior happened in reality but was written for our instruction and teaching. Giving models (τύποι) and lessons of perfect life, instructing and teaching us what we must do or say.

First, if you please, let us learn what the gathering of the Pharisees and Herodians was and what test they presented to Jesus. The assembly of the Jews, who transgressed the law (νόμος) and acted without reflection, after becoming fattened and thickened in spirit—as it is written—was the one that closed its ears to the commandments of God. But because of the words and names with which they had been adorned, so that they would honor virtue rather than wickedness, when they were in folly (ἄνοια), the Jews resisted by struggle and contention what is perfect and greatly boasted of their designations and titles, hearing God say to their fathers: "You shall be to Me a people more numerous than all the nations"—that is, surpassing and different by great number and multitude, and accounted as His possession, because the Jews are the creatures of Him who made all men, and they are the goods that God has appropriated by declaration and are those who do what befits His lordship, without being subjected to any master over them, whether the passion of sin or a false god. And they did not hear only this but also: "But you shall be to Me a royal priesthood and a holy nation", separated for a King, consecrated and sanctified for God. And it escaped these senseless and wretched men that names signify realities. For those are accounted as the numerous people of God and are truly called the numerous people and possession of God who,

according to the word of Paul, “present their members as slaves to righteousness and holiness”. And in the same way, those are the holy people and royal priesthood who, according to the word of the same Apostle, are “a living and holy sacrifice” with a sweet intellectual fragrance.

Therefore, the God of the universe did not use these honorific names lightly but only after first saying: “If you listen to My voice, if you do all that I command you, and if you keep My covenant, you shall be to Me a people more numerous than all the nations, My possession, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation.” Therefore, the Israelites were then in names entirely devoid of realities, and even when they sinned and said to Samuel: “Appoint a king over us to judge us like all the nations”, God was grieved and cared for them as His beloved, responding to Samuel: “It is not you they have rejected, but Me, that I should not reign over them.” And like a vine, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, He surrounded the people with a hedge—that is, with His own help. And those who had power over them and subjected them, the Jews defeated and conquered when they fought against them. But when, as it is written, their sins had reached their fullness, and pursuing their course to the height of wrath, they slipped and fell, then truly these words spoken through a prophet were fulfilled, as was the threat of God who said: “Now I will show you what I will do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge, and it shall be for plunder; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled underfoot.”

Therefore, after the return from Babylon, when they had forgotten such help, after the wars and captivities under the Macedonians and their sons, they finally came under the dominion of the Romans, the strongest of all nations, and became tributaries, albeit reluctantly, even risking the loss of the figurative worship they offered to God. Indeed, in the time of Tiberius Claudius Caesar and again in that of Gaius Caesar, it is written in histories that many Jews fell and were killed when the governor Pilate sought to set up a statue of Caesar in the temple of God. At the time when such a situation persisted in Jerusalem, there were some who persuaded the arrogant and blinded Jewish people to no longer pay the tribute to Caesar, which the Romans called “census” in their native language, meaning "consignment." And they were their guides and leaders, those who called themselves Pharisees because they claimed to know the Law (νόμος) in a very

special way and had a designation in conformity with reality—something they boasted of. For "Pharisee" (פָּרוּשׁ) in Hebrew signifies "separation" or "cutting off," so that in forming words, one would say "cutting" or "separation." These men also deceived and led astray many among the people when, by misusing divine words, they incited them to revolt and made them arrogant, refusing to bow before a foreigner and accept the yoke of servitude. Sometimes they quoted Moses: “The Lord’s portion is His people Jacob, the lot of His inheritance is Israel”; and: “You shall set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; from among your brothers you shall set a king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.” Other times, they muttered the words of Isaiah in a broad sense, distorting the meaning of the prophecies: “The Lord is your counselor, the Lord is your leader, the Lord is your judge”, not understanding that it is one thing to voluntarily appoint a leader according to their own legislation (νομοθεσία) and another to be punished under the law (νόμος) of war for their sins and submit to those stronger than themselves.

This band of Pharisees included Judas the Galilean, whom Luke mentions in the Acts (Πράξεις), saying: “Judas the Galilean rose up at the time of the census and drew many people after him in revolt; he perished, and all who obeyed him were scattered.” Now Herod, who was then the ruler of a tetrarchy—that is, one of the four divisions of Jewish authority (for the authority of the Jews, Galileans, and their neighbors was divided into four parts, each region having its own ruler, as Luke also mentions historically at the beginning of the Gospel narrative)—advised the inhabitants of Jerusalem, pitying them as his kin, to submit to the Romans and pay the tribute imposed on them. And there was another faction of the people who obeyed Herod’s counsel, accepted the name "Herodians," opposed the Pharisees, and rejected their spirit of revolt and rebellion.

What then was the counsel they took, as if it were important and astonishing? It was to entangle Christ, the power and wisdom of God the Father, with a crafty question and to catch God the Word in His words concerning a matter that had not been previously examined or discussed. “They took counsel”, it is said, “to entangle Him in His words. And the Pharisees sent their disciples with the Herodians, saying: "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, then, what You

think: Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" First, we must understand that perhaps armed men—servants of the governor Pontius Pilate—were also mixed with the Herodians, for Luke says: "Those who questioned Him craftily tested Him, to deliver Him to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor." For Herod was the ruler of Galilee, one of the four parts, and there he held his authority. They expected one of two outcomes from His answer, intending to show clearly that Jesus was at fault either against the Law (νόμος) of Moses or against Roman authority. If He answered that the tribute should be paid, the Pharisees would slander Him to their followers, saying: "He leads us away from the service of God under the Law (νόμος) of Moses and draws us to a foreign power not of our race." That is why Luke says: "They could not catch Him in His words before the people"—for they questioned Him publicly (δημοσίως), that is, in the assembly of the people, to turn the people against Him. And if He forbade paying the tribute, the Herodians would immediately seize Him as one not subject to Roman authority.

See the passion of hypocrisy: how it concealed all the enmity and murderous intent of the Jews under the vile veil of flattery, and how those who hated involuntarily honored Him to cast Him into the pit. For those who said: "We are disciples of Moses, but this man, we do not know where He is from"—called Him "Teacher". Those who called Him "deceiver" and "seducer" said: "We know that You are truthful." Those who resisted Him with jealousy and ignorance, saying: "This man is not from God, for He does not keep the Sabbath", and: "He has a demon"—testified that "He teaches the way of God in truth." Those who accused Him of misleading the people said: "You do not regard the person of men"—though a deceiver seeks nothing but to please men and regard their persons. Those who stoned and persecuted Him pretended obedience, asking: "Tell us what You think", not realizing in their folly (ἄνοια) that such a sudden change would seem implausible even to the most credulous, let alone to God the Word, who knows the hidden and deep movements of the heart.

Therefore, these Pharisees, ashamed in some way yet not descending from their arrogance, sent their disciples with the Herodians, who spoke with the pride of a frivolous spirit (κενόδοξα). What then did the Wisdom and Word of God do? He allowed their passion to be exposed publicly, without rebuking their idle talk.

Then, like a skilled physician, He made a deep incision into their passion, first cutting with His initial word: “Why do you test Me, hypocrites?” And after exposing the deceitful skin of hypocrisy with this reproach, He gently and imperceptibly cut through their inevitable question like a spider’s web: “Show Me the tribute money.” And they brought Him a denarius. “Whose image and inscription is this?” They said: “Caesar’s.” Then He said to them: “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. If the denarius is Caesar’s—as you say—it must be given to Caesar himself.” “What then? Do You permit us to serve a man and not God? How is this not outside the Law (νόμος)?” “Not at all. Paying tribute to Caesar does not hinder the service of God, though you wish it so. Therefore, you must also give to God what is God’s, so that if what is Caesar’s were withheld for the service of God, God would be preferred over him. And the fact that you are tributaries to Caesar, you must attribute to your sins, not to God.” As Paul also adhered to this distinction when writing to the Romans: “Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs.”

But the words: “Show Me the tribute money” and “Whose image and inscription is this?” also reveal a higher meaning. For Jesus, seeing the soul of His questioners—created in the image of God—but finding no royal likeness in it, seeing instead that it had become entirely flesh and bore the inscription of the intellectual Caesar, the Slanderer and the Evil One who rules the world, said reproachfully: “Show Me the tribute money. Whose image and inscription is this? If it is God’s—as it is written, You are the Lord’s portion—then give it to God. But if it is Caesar’s, since you belong to Caesar, serve Caesar and do not seek God, whose image you do not bear.”

Let each of us examine the denarius of his soul, and let all preserve the royal and divine image, as the Apostle admonishes: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Let us give the body necessary food and clothing, but devote the rest to our inner man. Let us carefully examine every thought that advises and teaches us what to do, and let us say to it: “Show me the tribute money. Whose image and inscription is this?” If it bears the likeness and image of God, let us accept it; if of Caesar, let us cast it away. It is a great and most

profitable thing to correct ourselves before the day of judgment rises upon us, lest we hear with bitterness the Judge say: “Show me the tribute money. Whose image and inscription is this?” For then, when we are rejected and hear, as in Jeremiah’s prophecy: “Call them rejected silver”, we shall be cast into eternal fire. Hearing this, all you who love adornment and outwardly decorate the corruptible statue with gold and fine garments, examine yourselves with humility: “Whose image and inscription is this?” And without delay, turn to the care of the soul’s beauty, for the outer beauty, soon after the bond is broken, will dissolve into dust. But this is useful and profitable, and as far as possible, especially necessary even for faith.

For if someone ignorantly asks: “Is it lawful to anathematize an entire council of bishops?” say to him: “Show me the tribute money.” And if you find that one—our Lord and God Jesus Christ—is impiously divided on a rejected and foreign denarius, by the duality of natures after the ineffable union, immediately ask: “Whose image and inscription is this?” And if it is not God’s—as it is not—let what is not God’s be separated from God by anathema. “But I respect the dignity of the priesthood, for I hear one of the holy prophets say: The lips of the priest should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law (νόμος) at his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of hosts.” Do you not hear Paul saying through Christ who spoke in him: But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, let him be accursed? Did he respect the dignity of angels, even if one descended from heaven, when he altered the faith? Consider also the words you recalled: “The lips of the priest should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law (νόμος) at his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of hosts.” Thus, we must regard priests as angels of the Lord of hosts only when they keep the knowledge of divine things, do not transgress the Law (νόμος), and teach it faithfully to those who seek it. But if they lead others into error, where shall we place such men? Certainly with the wicked and foreign shepherds. But some among them thought rightly, you say. Then they should have fled and said with the prophet David: “I have not sat with the assembly of vanity, nor will I enter with those who transgress the Law (νόμος); I have hated the assembly of the wicked, and I will not sit with the ungodly; I will wash my hands in innocence.”

Let them also remember the command of Moses: “You shall not follow a multitude to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many.” Let them blush at this: “When you saw a thief, you consented with him, and you shared with adulterers.” And as Gregory the Theologian said: “Let the ink not become black at the same time as the impious writing of the hand.” But they were overcome by circumstances and later repented, you say. Now it is not I who answer you, but the wise Basil, writing to some: “If some say they have repented, let them show their repentance in writing, by anathematizing the faith of Constantinople and separating from the heretics (αἱρετικοί), and let them not deceive the simple.” Thus, it was not enough to mock impiety in writing through repentance and anathema; they also had to separate from communion with those who held such opinions. For how absurd is it that blasphemy is confirmed in writing, while repentance is feigned without writing? Would that some had repented according to the law! For such are not included in the general anathema against the Council (σύνοδος) of Chalcedon, having removed themselves by repentance from that assembly.

Just as one who converts from Judaism or Arianism is no longer a Jew or Arian, so too one who departs from here is not counted among the condemned. For if someone anathematized those who shed the blood of righteous Stephen, he would not include Paul, who was exempted by lawful repentance. Or if someone cursed those who denied Christ, he would not include Peter, who denied but repented. Let no one, taking false pretexts from sins, devise sophistries against the laws (νόμος) of the holy Church under the guise of philanthropy (φιλανθρωπία), but let him hold fast to the laws (νόμος) and leave no room for wickedness to peer through such cold rules and gain license (παρρησία). If legitimate condescension is needed toward the separated, let us still heed the laws (νόμος) of the Holy Scriptures and the doctors of the holy Church, lest we spoil what is ours and take what belongs to others, as Gregory the Theologian also said. For we are hated not to fall but to lift up the fallen, so that, as Paul says, “grace, having abounded, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God”, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

## HOMILY 105 ON THE HOLY FAST (OF LENT), WHICH IS THE FIFTH (ON THIS SUBJECT). IT WAS DELIVERED IN THE GREAT CHURCH.

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The holy ark, where the tablets of the Law, written by God were kept, the marvelous rod of Aaron which, some time after being composed, produced in one night leaves, bark, and fruits, and the golden vessel, that preserved the nourishing and inexhaustible heavenly rain—I mean the manna—was once taken by the Philistines when they defeated the Israelites in a pitched battle, who had angered God. But after the Philistines in turn were severely punished and struck with incurable ulcers, they placed the ark on a cart and returned it with reverence and offerings when they learned through the ark who its God was. But when the ark returned from the enemies in such a marvelous and divine manner, without anyone suffering or fighting, those called Israelites had their minds so sunk in the forgetfulness of God that they did not awaken at the sight and realization of miracles of such magnitude and kind, nor did they praise the Lord and the author of these wonders, though they ought to have rejoiced and exulted spiritually, following the example of the prophet David, who danced and exulted before the ark when it was brought into the temple in the same manner at another time.

What, then, does the sacred Book say about those who in the first instance saw the ark in an immense manner, to whom the others also resembled? Among the men of Bethshemesh, the sons of Jechonias did not rejoice because they had seen the ark of the Lord, and He struck among them seventy men and fifty thousand men. Hearing this myself, I fear and tremble. And the cycle of these forty holy days of fasting, which did not come from the Philistines but from the heavens themselves—for it is from there that it is commanded to us—it is by bowing the neck and bending low that I incline before it and salute it, and not only that, but I also welcome it with joy, exult, and rejoice. I exhort you also to do and think likewise, for the thought must be in good health before the action, so that what is done comes from the thought.

Fasting does not bring us tablets of stone but Christ, God, the lawgiver and king, who fasted for us. For why would the physician need remedies for his own benefit? It is certain, indeed, that the healing plasters are suited to the sick and not to those

in good health. How will one who does not know sin ever be counted among the sick? Indeed, if the premise is that He incarnated and became man for you and your salvation—for we profess this equally in the Creed—in every way, it is also for you that He fasted, for what follows agrees with the premises. He who did not incarnate for Himself also did not accept fasting for Himself out of necessity. And the apostle Paul is a witness, who clearly showed all this in few words: "Know, indeed," he says, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who for you became poor, though He was rich, so that you might be enriched by His poverty." For God, who absolutely needs nothing—for, properly speaking, He is rich who needs nothing and is self-sufficient in all things—it is poverty to incarnate, to converse with men, to be baptized, likewise to fast, and to accept the temptation of the Slanderer. But it is by His grace toward us that He consented to become poor for us to such an extent, though He was rich. For this word: "Know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who for you became poor, though He was rich," has great significance, and it is to show much that it is said by the Apostle. "Know," he says, "the greatness of grace." One needs the eyes of a lively spirit to understand this. He who is rich by nature became poor for us when He subjected Himself to the degree of total poverty and truly became man while remaining God; for if He were not one of many, He could not have become poor for others. And how, properly speaking, could He who is not rich become poor?

Leaving instructions and teachings for the struggles and preparatory exercises of perfection, breaking and paralyzing the power of the one who had tyrannically prevailed. And this is what Paul said: "Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted." "In the manner," he says, "that He endured the temptation, in that manner He has prepared for us a powerful help, sufficient to repel the one who presents the same temptation." Therefore, the temptation of Jesus does not stem from weakness. How, indeed, could this temptation, which has given help to those who have similar temptations, come from weakness? That is why the angels also, approaching, served Him as God, one of whom, if commanded, would necessarily put the Slanderer to flight. But it is through all this that what is fitting for God is shown—the perspective of teaching and the free will of the one who became poor for our salvation.
Who, then, will despise fasting as superfluous, when this God and Savior and teacher, who is the master of perfection, has shown us that it is more necessary

than all else? Then, when only the ordinances of the king are posted by the leaders in the public square, it is of absolute necessity that we fulfill them; and when God has done such an action for us and thus commanded what He has done, is not the one who does not promptly obey reckless and self-despising? For me, just as I have heard in the Gospels the cry: "He who eats My body and drinks My blood has eternal life, and he abides in Me, and I in him," I very clearly imagine hearing Him say by what He has done: "He who fasts My fast has eternal life, and he abides in Me, and I in him." In the same way: "He who takes up My cross, he who becomes poor with My poverty, he who preaches My word, he who truly clings to what is Mine." For He taught so that we might act ourselves, and not so that, doing nothing, we might transgress His commandments.

However, if, on the contrary, fasting is not a necessary action and does not purify the soul, is it not little in terms of honor that we fast with Christ? And he who is associated with the king in the same concerns obtains the same honors; does the imitation of God not have divine rewards? Since we are rational, must we not unite these divine distinctions rather than all that is swept away by the passing storm of this world? Therefore, because fasting is a necessary and magnificent action that leads to God and elevates to His imitation, let us go! Let us fast in such a way that it is the fast of Jesus. For it is possible that we may observe a fast that is particular to us and not that of Jesus.

And just as those ten virgins, after lighting the lamps of virginity and adorning them carefully and taking care likewise to go to meet the bridegroom, did not all gain entry to the wedding feast—for among them were those who had lit the lamps for themselves and not for Jesus, because they had turned away from pity for those in need—so it is also possible that we may fast, and yet not fast for Jesus. I will continue, then, to teach a spirit of this kind. If a king proclaims in one of his cities that he wishes to take for marriage the daughter of one of the inhabitants of the city whom he finds on the day when one must marry, the one who is more beautiful, honorable, and chastely raised than the others, is it not certain for everyone that each of those raising daughters would take great care to gather all the ornaments of the soul and body so that his daughter might be in every way more beautiful than the others, in order to ally himself by kinship with the king through this marriage?

Thus, whoever fasts should adorn his fast like his daughter with all ornaments, fearing that the king, Christ, may not judge his fast worthy of His alliance and that he himself may be deprived of such kinship. Indeed, if you abstain from food and one of the poor in the public square approaches you and asks for an obol or something else from what you possess in abundance and can easily give, and if you send him away mercilessly without giving him anything, often even after insulting him, you fast for yourself and not for Jesus. You will do the same if you are severe with those who owe you money or gold or accumulated interest, counting sometimes even what is not a debt. But if, on the contrary, you appear just, pleasant, and charitable, if you forgive part of what is owed, whether you permit it openly or conceal it according to the Gospel and do not dwell on it but pass quickly over it in forgetfulness, so that you do not show this action and your left hand does not know what your right hand is doing, and if you show a mercy known only to God toward the wife and children whom this poor man feeds by his labor, you have adorned your fast with a royal ornament. And the king will envy your beauty, as David, the prophet of the psalms, says, and He will hasten to unite with you, greeting you from afar.

If, when you fast, you are occupied with lawsuits, dragging one before the judge's tribunal, imprisoning another, causing another to be torn by blows, such a fast smells bad and is repulsive, turning away from it the nose and eyes of the king, and He remains without marrying you. And when you prolong the fast with very great privations of food, you will also make it exceed the measure and ignore—which is senseless—that it is for you a virgin, joyful and beautiful because of the absence of food, but unpleasant, hateful, and not leading to gladness in her person. And he who irritates, angers, insults, wounds needlessly, harbors wrath in his spirit, who comes to ridiculous, senseless, and dishonorable words, and who charms his eye or ear with the sight of public women and spectacles and obscene songs, does not realize that mud fills his fast. You, O man, have a tongue dried by thirst and the privation of food, with no moisture, so that you may be inert in the face of insult and dispute, without wielding the instrument that lends itself to these actions, all prepared and perhaps leaping out quickly, and not so that, sharpening and making savage the fury from the bile that comes from the privation of food, you also raise your languid and lazy tongue, which is moved not by nature but by the ardor of anger.

The fast teaches sadness, and it lowers and chastely lowers the eyelid, so that it restrains and stops the light and disordered gaze, without introducing and dwelling on trouble and agitation in the spirit, easily spreading over everything and being caught in the nets of concupiscence. You, when you fast, willingly go to dances, as well as to revelries and songs full of all impurity and lust. For if you do this when you fast, those who do not fast will say: "What more has the one who fasts done? In what is he more chaste than we? In what is he more charitable? In what is he more pleasant or gentle? Is not such a one even more execrable and harsher to those who meet him? Is he not unpleasant to see, difficult to meet, unbearable, and unapproachable to be greeted? That one has turned away from the fast that has made him so; I am almost frightened, lest he bite someone who approaches him. It is better for someone to eat beef and drink wine than to be so savage in his manners like wild beasts. Is not such a one, when he fasts, with the mimes who tell stories to make people laugh? Is he not permanently at all hours in a dance hall? Does he abstain from seeing anything that cannot be seen among what is done under the tent?

As for me, when I bathe at the third hour and dine well at the fourth, I meet my friends after they have seen the spectacles, and I attend to my affairs; am I inferior in my way of life, I who create a manner of living and go away from all comparison with those who fast badly?" He says this, giving himself as just and perhaps sick with the worst avarice, which is the mother of all evils and their bitter root, and still imagining himself to be healthy, though he has only shown by what he has said that those who fast but do not do what befits the fast will also undergo the judgment and condemnation of the blasphemy that is uttered against it because of them. For if the fast is something good and the commandment of the Holy Spirit, it will also have good fruits and will bring praise to God, and not blasphemy. And what are the fruits? Paul enumerates them, writing to the Galatians thus: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." If the fast is devoid of these fruits, even if we praise it and conduct ourselves in it improperly, our Savior will also say to us: "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit."

It must be known that the hypocrisy of appearances is foreign to the tree of fasting, as well as fasting to be seen and paying attention to vainglory. For many have come to this misfortune and advance on the path contrary to the laws of our Lord, which want us not to show even the fast that truly exists. That is why, though they do not fast, they want to pass for ascetics and continent; and though they wallow in passions more shameful than all, they want to pass for celibate and solitary. And with this in view, they make themselves black garments, and they are accustomed to lower their heads, bristle their hair, look somber, and utter small phrases mixed with boastfulness and misery. About these, one will laugh because of the deceptive pledge of this world, but one will weep because of the torment decreed for them. As for us, weak and sinful, may our Lord deliver us from this wickedness and from the Pharisaic severity that must be fled and is justly hateful, and all the more so as the love of men has taken care to lean on it; it is about it that He says to His disciples in the Gospels: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

You also, O woman, when you fast—for I will also tell you something in particular in addition to these general recommendations and commandments—beware of the passion of anger; for women are very easily and violently inclined to it. Do not be severe with your maidservants; do not lengthen their service in what concerns them and add nothing to it; ask for what is customary, lest they insult the fast. Even toward the servants, appear charitable, gentle, humble, peaceful, content, and patient. And if fury often awakens you and pushes you to extend your hand and strike, consider the fast that, like a formidable queen, stands above your head and seizes you and prevents you from striking. And if you are thus disposed in your spirit and hold back the swelling of anger that makes you leap and bound, it is still a crown on your head; for the queen likewise stands above your head, crowning you. And so you will need nothing difficult. But the model of your perfection will be the head of the household. And, being very reserved and loving all together, you will direct all your life in tranquility and calm. Men and women, let us adorn our fast with good works and make it the fast of Jesus, God, so that we may celebrate the feast (of Easter) not with the old leaven of ancient sins but with the unleavened bread of purity and truth and the perfect and divine renewal, as Paul says, by the grace and charity of Him who has called us. To Him be glory forever! Amen!

## HOMILY 106 ON THE PREPARATION FOR ENTRY INTO THE BAPTISTERY ACCORDING TO CUSTOM. TABLE OF CONTENTS

And after having given you once or twice the cause and the reason why, when the beginning of the holy days of fasting rises upon us, we withdraw and distance ourselves until the feast of the Savior's passion and resurrection, from entering the house (which is) "synonymous with light" and from the source of the Jordan which has beautiful and numerous children, I deemed it quite superfluous to speak again at this moment on the same subject, lest some, due to lack of reflection, might judge me as doing this out of habit, like a debt among pressing obligations. For, it is good, and of paramount usefulness, that we frequently and ceaselessly recall in our minds what has already been said, that we meditate on it and hold fast to it through our actions. But I judge it neither useful nor necessary for one who has nothing new to say to speak again on the same subjects. Indeed, a Christian must act much and speak little and moderately, and ask for themselves the fulfillment of what is said or heard at all times.

Go, then, and let each of you prepare for the future entry into the holy house, where there is a source of spiritual fire, which illuminates, purifies, gives birth, and flows continuously; it flows from eternal life, Christ, and sends to the life that is for the ages. Let us think of the divine feast that our Savior described in the Gospels: and, as if invited to the mystical banquet, let us have our garments ready. If there is any stain, now that we have the opportunity, let us cleanse it; for nothing purifies like fasting, cutting off the passions of the flesh, washing carefully with tears, and cleansing through the labors of ascetic life. If the house is of light, the garment will also be of light. We shall not hear: “My friend, how did you enter here without a resplendent garment?” Moreover, our mother, the source of the bath of regeneration, when she is about to bring forth a new birth, wishes to show to those who are about to be born her previously born children, that is, us, and to say to them: "See, my children, your elder brothers, envy them and follow in their footsteps; you have been united with them in the same divine birth and in the same spiritual childbirth; embrace the same occupations as they and share in the labors of perfection. After showing yourselves as their brothers, do what belongs to brothers, and not what belongs to strangers."

Consider what the danger is, how great the preparation we need, in order to be for those who are about to receive the ineffable light an example of a good life. For truly, the conduct of those who have already believed can cause either great profit or great loss to those newly approaching. Indeed, it is due to the negligence and laziness of those previously enrolled among the faithful that they consider the bath to be only a figure and an appearance, and moreover a deception; and it is due to the zeal and activity that they consider it the pledge of good works. Behold, again I have described to you a little, in my feeble words, the power of the house of light, the departure that takes place now, the entry that will take place soon, the laws with which one must enter, the preparation, the fear, the hope, the end to which what is accomplished here refers. And indeed, I have heard the divine command addressed to Ezekiel, even if I wished to remain silent; and it is with trembling that I obeyed and told you these few words. What is the command? “And you shall describe the house, and its arrangement, and its exits, and its entrances, and its state, and all its commandments, and all its customs; you shall make them known and describe before them all its laws, and they shall observe all my prescriptions and all my commandments, and they shall execute them.”

It is therefore for me to describe and show the path of what must be done: and truly, I have also done so, having said great things in few words. It is for me again, and for you also, to accomplish the commandments and the laws; for action is common. And he who teaches is not already exempt from acting; all the more is he bound to do what he teaches; for a word without action cannot reach the soul or be perceived by the ears. Thus Ezekiel, describing the house that had been shown to him, says, among the gates, some were to the north, others to the south, others in different places; and he says that he who enters by such a gate must not turn back and exit by the same gate, expressing it thus: “And he shall not turn back by the way of the gate by which he entered, but he shall go out straight ahead”, instructing us clearly by this figure that he who has had access to divine spectacles, and as long as he has been in the temple and within the mysteries, must not run backward again, but must desire what is ahead, must go from one end to the other as much as possible, and must say with Paul: “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize of God's heavenly calling.”

As for me, when I see this divine house entirely placed toward the east, or rather in the light itself, and illuminated by the sun of justice, I do not reason with you about the entry and the exit; but I advise you, even though we are bodily outside the house for a short time, to be in spirit within, to remain constantly near it and never to depart from it. For how could the soul live the true life when separated from the light, even for a short time that cannot be defined due to its brevity? But now, bowing your heads toward this source full of blessings, pray earnestly and actively for the state of the whole world, for the perfect balance of affairs, for those who fight for the orthodox faith, for the peace of man, of the outer man, of the inner man, for what is seen, for what is understood. And He who gives also to those who are enlightened will give you in every way, with the forgiveness of your sins, the fulfillment and happy outcome of all that you ask. For earnest and active prayer can accomplish something great in the house of the Holy of Holies. May it be granted to us that after all this we may also obtain the kingdom of heaven by the grace and love of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, with whom glory befits the Father with His holy, life-giving, and consubstantial Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages! Amen!

**HOMILY 107 IT WAS PRONOUNCED DURING THE FAST (IN RESPONSE) TO SOME DOUBTS REGARDING THE SCRIPTURES, WHICH HAD BEEN ADDRESSED AND PRESENTED TO (SEVERUS). THE FIRST IS: "WHAT THEN DOES THE PROPHET ISAIAH MEAN WHEN HE SAYS: 'ON THAT DAY, THERE WILL BE FIVE CITIES IN EGYPT THAT WILL SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF CANAAN, AND THEY WILL SWEAR BY THE NAME OF THE LORD OF HOSTS. THIS ONE CITY WILL BE CALLED THE CITY OF ASEDEK'?" (ISAIAH 19:18). THE ENTIRE HOMILY IS PRONOUNCED ON THIS DOUBT BECAUSE, DUE TO ITS LENGTH, IT COULD NOT ADDRESS THE OTHERS.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Among those who, in the desert of Egypt, devote themselves to monastic rule (μοναστικός) and to ascetic and philosophical life, and who live greatly by the spirit and little by the flesh, only as much as is necessary to breathe, a man named Philip—may he be remembered clearly and in writing before the Church, and may he receive from me this immediate reward for his desire to learn (φιλομαθία)—has addressed and presented by letter some questions drawn from the words of the God-inspired Book, which seem doubtful, insoluble, and full of secrecy for the mind, asking that they receive from me a clear and luminous solution and explanation.

As for me, I recognize that I am very poor in the knowledge of divine things, and I do not venture into what is beyond my strength, yet I honor a modest and unfailing silence. I further fear not to say about what is asked even what comes to me insidiously, considering the servant of the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλιον), who hid in the earth the talent entrusted to him and incurred blame for keeping it, which neither diminished nor increased what had been entrusted to him. It seems to me that under the accusation of a fault similar to that of this (servant) also falls the act of hiding in a corner (γωνία) the research and examination of what is so necessary, and of not spreading among the multitude what is profitable. That is why I renounce responding privately by letter to the one who questioned; and I try, according to my little strength, to speak before you on this (subject), trusting and believing well that He who by His own blood redeemed the Church from sin, because of the piety (θεοσέβεια) and the insatiability of your ears for spiritual hearings, will also pour

out His mercy abundantly upon me, granting me liberally thoughts and words at the same time. Thus, the great Paul also asked the Ephesians to pray for him, saying: “Pray for me also, that the word may be given to me in opening my mouth” (Ephesians 6:19). What is surprising, then, if I, too, small as I am, expect through the confidence I have in you that very rich and abundant means of explanation come to me to clarify what we cited above?

This present time also seems particularly suitable and favorable for this. Indeed, in what other time should the questions of these holy men who live in continence be resolved, if not in these holy and pure days of fasting and continence? Therefore, while God extends His hand to us, let us move on to the first question, as far as it is possible for us. "What does it mean," he says, "what is said by the prophet Isaiah in these (terms): 'On that day, there will be five cities in Egypt that will speak the language of Canaan, and they will swear by the name of the Lord of hosts. This one city will be called the city of Asedek'?" (Isaiah 19:18). I was about to present, according to an easy meaning, the response of history and to show, with the help of the Jewish Antiquities (Ἀρχαιολογία) of Josephus and of what is said by Saint Cyril, how a high priest (ἀρχιερεύς) of the Jews, after being expelled, or after having freed the captives from their place and led many of his compatriots, lived on the borders of Palestine and Egypt, near the small town called Rhinokoroura—these are the ones who still now have the custom of using both languages, namely that of the Egyptians and that used by the Palestinians and Phoenicians; the latter, in fact, is the language of Canaan—and how it seemed to me that it was in this that the words of the prophecy were fulfilled, when those who had been taken into captivity had erected in the land of Heliopolis of Egypt both a temple and an altar according to the model and type (τύπος) of Jerusalem. But, because the one who questioned me asked and begged me, on the one hand, to rise above the letter, to despise Jewish poverty, and to care little for history, which cannot, in my opinion, be given very accurately either, and, on the other hand, to give and teach a truer and higher meaning, which is also symbolically conveyed in the expressions of prophecy—for it pleases those who purify themselves by the active labors of perfection to rise to contemplation (θεωρία) and to know these great facts in accordance with the Gospel and in a magnificent (μεγαλοπρεπῶς) way, and not to lower them to a sense that envies the earth, because the Law (νόμος) is also spiritual for the spiritual, and likewise those who prophesied at that time (are

spiritual for the spiritual)—I will continue to say about this passage of prophecy before us what has come to our mind.

When Isaiah was himself initiated into the vision he had concerning Egypt and wrote it down for us, he also predicted the descent there of our Lord, our God, and our Savior Jesus Christ, when He was still a small child according to the flesh, after Joseph received this order in a dream and heard the angel say: "Take the child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you; for Herod will seek the child to destroy Him" (Matthew 2:13). And then, successively, in the same vision, the prophet details how many goods were caused by the descent of our Savior into Egypt, or rather (μᾶλλον δέ) His descent from heaven upon the whole earth; for it is the same thing to say Egypt and the whole earth. The divine Book, in fact, has the custom of comparing once to Egypt, another time to Babylon, which were very idolatrous (εἰδωλολατρία), and of calling by their name the Church which is recruited among the godless nations "who had no hope" (Ephesians 2:12), as Paul says.

The descent of our Savior, then, both into Egypt and upon the whole earth, shakes and makes tremble the works of the hands (χειροποίητος) of Egypt, that is, the diabolical objects of worship, the lifeless statues of idols, the altars, and the other (objects) made by the hands of men. And the Egyptians and all the idolaters (εἰδωλολάτρης) have despised and cursed their former error, and they have been conquered by the truth of the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον); and those who were difficult like Pharaoh (Exodus 7:13) and stubborn and disobedient have submitted. And the law (νόμος) of the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον) has opposed the law (νόμος) of the fathers; it has conquered and prevailed over it by power. Indeed, the small prodigies of divination have fallen silent, and the omen (basis) on birds (οἰωνοσκοπία) and on all the others (beings) has been turned into derision; the movements of soothsayers and ventriloquists or (their) murmurs, as well as everything that resembles these (practices) from the point of view of error, have passed for an empty tale. And, when they advanced and came to progress and grow in perfection, the Egyptians opposed the Egyptians, and man fought with his brother (Isaiah 19:2); for we must quote here on this subject the words of the prophet in his own terms. The cause of the combat was the religion (θεοσέβεια) that took place in Christ; it was predicted by Him in the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον), and it accomplished what had been proclaimed

in advance by Isaiah. Was this not, in fact, what (Our Lord) predicted concerning those who would believe in Him: “The brother will deliver his brother to death, and the father his child, and the children will rise up against (their) parents and put them to death” (Matthew 10:21)? After the prophet has detailed and said successively these (words) and similar ones about this admirable change and about (this) transformation into what is perfect, he also comes to show and publish before the whole world the superiority and great success of the Egyptians in the evangelical and philosophical life of monasticism, and he says: “On that day, there will be five cities in Egypt that will speak the language of Canaan” (Isaiah 19:18).

These five cities are our five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, which are cities, since they move according to the laws (νόμος) of God and do what is lawful. For the proper function of a city is to be well administered according to the laws (νόμος); and indeed, it is according to the administration and the very lawful conduct of its inhabitants that it is called a "city." That is why, when something contrary to the law (νόμος) happens there, we are accustomed to say that it is not a city. Sight, therefore, conducts itself according to the law (νόμος) like a city, and it speaks in the language of Canaan, that is, in the (language) of the part of God—for the part of God is the Promised Land (Numbers 18:20), as the God-inspired Books say, and especially because it is in it that the mystery of the incarnation of God the Word was accomplished—whenever it does not look at a woman to covet her (Matthew 5:28), but when it follows the intelligence (as) the leader who restrains and stops the gaze and (who) learns and teaches well what must be seen. But when it looks and sees in a voluptuous and intemperate manner and with a love of pleasure (φιληδονία), delighting in beauties that corrupt and pass away, it speaks in the language of Egypt, and not in that of Canaan. Hearing, too, when it obeys the commandments and says to God in the manner of Samuel: “Speak, Lord, for your servant hears” (1 Samuel 3:10), is a city of God, and it speaks in the language of Canaan. But when it transgresses the commandment of the law (νόμος) which commands and says: “You shall not accept a vain rumor” (Exodus 23:1), it speaks in a foreign language like the Egyptians, and it has a heavy and unpleasant speech, resembling a buzzing, and it does not (speak) in the language of Canaan. Smell, too, when it is not softened and effeminate, when it turns away from the outpouring of all odors and gathers from everywhere and from everything virility and energy, and when, on the contrary, it can say to God because of this: “Let my prayer be set

forth before you as incense" (Psalm 141:2), it belongs to Canaan. But it is in Egyptian that it behaves again when it anoints itself with the most excellent and ancient fragrant oils (Amos 6:6), as the prophet Amos says somewhere. Taste, likewise, after being well instructed by Paul to say: "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want" (Philippians 4:11-12), speaks what is lawful and proper to the language of Canaan. But when it speaks like those who had become slaves of (their) belly (Romans 16:18), namely those who had come out of Egypt and were in Egypt in their spirit, without having left it, and who said because of this: "Who will give us meat to eat? For we remember the fish we ate in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic" (Numbers 11:4-5), not so much (μᾶλλον) in pronouncing, but in vomiting these (words) of the Egyptians, it is certain that such a taste possesses by itself a stench (δυσωδία), and not a speech that has flavor and beautiful meaning (εὔνοια), and that it makes the belly its god (Philippians 3:19). And touch, too, when it does not transgress what is lawful, I mean the honorable marriage and the pure conjugal bed (Hebrews 13:4), and when it fulfills the sublime admonition of the Apostle, who says: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" (1 Corinthians 7:1), to speak properly—and (it is) the very reality—it speaks in the language of Canaan, and as one would speak in the Attic language and when one speaks in the Greek language in a perfect and chaste manner. But the touch that touches the carnal commerce which (is) outside the Law (νόμος), (which) takes the members of Christ and makes them members of a prostitute, and (which) clings (to her) and makes the two one flesh by carnal union (1 Corinthians 6:15-16), when it burns with the (passions) of the Egyptians as well as with fever and is delirious, tells what (comes) from there and does not say what is regular, while it is completely ignorant (ἄμουσος) and untaught in the language of Canaan.

But, after the Egyptians received the yoke of Christ, they learned and taught these five senses, through the labors of the ascetic life, to act and conduct themselves according to the Gospel and the laws, with order (κόσμος) and temperance, and they showed them cities that are well administered according to the laws (νόμος), that speak and govern (πολιτεύομαι) in the language of Canaan. And among the Egyptians, the greatest number—for indeed, the prophecy applies to the greatest

number—after having formed and exercised these senses of the body by the sweats of perfection, made them cities in the manner that has been said. Some, few in number, like the great Antony, when they conducted themselves in a higher and more elevated manner, doubled them, placing a wall and a bulwark, as Isaiah says in another passage (Isaiah 26:1). And indeed, even in the soul, there is a sight that does not behave in an Egyptian manner and does not acquiesce to diabolical thoughts, but (which) speaks in the language of Canaan. And it raises its intellectual eyes upward and remains applied to heavenly thoughts once it has already been rectified by reason and has taken its manner, and it no longer inclines at all toward what is below.

There is also, likewise, a hearing that is circumcised (Jeremiah 6:10), according to a word of the prophet, as to the inner ears, and that can hear Jesus our Savior say: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15), and Paul who writes: "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. But if anyone does not know, let him not know" (1 Corinthians 14:37-38). It is to the hearing that (is) according to the spirit that what Isaiah said also relates, when he perceived the divine light that shone as well as the darkness: "He has set me in the morning to understand, in the morning He has added an ear to me to hear" (Isaiah 50:4). Indeed, the ear is linked to understanding. Moreover, how else would one understand the addition of an ear from a bodily point of view? There is therefore also, in this manner, an intellectual smell that, renouncing the (odors) of the Egyptians, speaks in the language of Canaan and perceives a spiritual odor, just as Isaac seized the smell of Jacob as equivalent to a blessing and said: "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed" (Genesis 27:27), and like the young maidens (παρθένος) who, in the Song of Songs, say to the Bridegroom, Christ: "We will run after you to the smell of your perfumes" (Song of Solomon 1:3). That the taste of the intellect speaks in the language of Canaan, the prophet Ezekiel has given us a very evident and clear proof, when he received the order to swallow the beginning of the book and ate it and said: "And it was in my mouth as sweet as honey" (Ezekiel 3:3). Thus also tastes he who tastes with knowledge "the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51). There is also an intellectual touch, which was attested by our Savior Christ; He was then pressed and squeezed by the crowd and felt that He had been touched by a woman

suffering from a flow of blood (Luke 8:46), and He said: “Someone has touched me; for I perceive that power has gone out from me”.

Those who double these five cities and (who) by the outer man and the inner man see, hear, smell, taste, and touch according to the laws, sing to the honor of God on the ten-stringed harp (Psalm 33:2), as the prophet David says. And each will hear on the day of judgment this word that Our Lord said in advance in the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλιον): “Have authority over ten cities” (Luke 19:17), as if He said: "You who have made these twice five senses cities well administered according to the good legislations (νόμος) of the Spirit and who have also taught them to speak in the language of Canaan, enjoy the honor that is fitting; as you have become ruler over ten cities, possess the authority, that is, the honor and dignity (ἀξίωμα), also over ten cities." And indeed, it is according to the custom that (exists) among us that He shows the ineffable honors of the glory to come and prepared for those who have conducted themselves well. Moreover, it is to the part that brings the second rank (ἀξίωμα), and to these five cities to which it has taught and instructed only outwardly to exchange the language of the Egyptians for that of Canaan, that this judge and organizer of the contests (ἀγωνοθέτης) says: “And you, be over five cities” (Luke 19:19). "But," he says, "these Egyptians, of whom it is a question, have taught, either to these cities that are understood once five, or to these (cities) that (are understood) twice five, not only to speak in the language of Canaan, but also to swear by the name of the Lord of hosts."—The (word) "oaths" makes known according to the manifest and outward meaning that the change, that is, the passage to religion (θεοσέβεια) from idolatrous error (εἰδωλοδαίμων), gives rise as by oaths to worship and adoration. But it indicates more truly the firm, immutable, and unshakable resolution of those who in turn have exchanged the manner of speaking of the Egyptians to speak in the language of Canaan, according to what the prophet of the psalms also traces the conduct pure of all stain and says: “I have sworn, and I will perform it, to keep your righteous judgments” (Psalm 119:106).

The Apostle also makes known, writing to the Hebrews, that the form (σχῆμα) of oaths is understood because of a "non-violation" and an affirmation, and that it is by it that God is also written to have sworn. He expresses himself thus: “So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He interposed with an oath” (Hebrews

6:17). It is in a lasting possession of the language of Canaan that were these five cities of the Egyptians, to such an extent that in place of the mother tongue there was in them science itself, which constantly shows the custom more than the affirmation of oaths. But why did the prophet say: “There will be five cities in Egypt that will speak the language of Canaan” (Isaiah 19:18), and not rather (μᾶλλον) in the language of the Jews or in that of the Hebrews and of Israel? This deserves investigation. Indeed, this nation of the Canaanites is one of the cursed nations that had previously occupied the Promised Land. But it is when Isaiah—or rather (μᾶλλον δέ) the Spirit who spoke in him—foresaw the mystery hidden in this name that he also predicted it. For Christ, the Word of God, who became man for us, directing all things wisely, silenced the folly (ἄνοια) and arrogance of the Jews and gave them absolutely no bold occasion they could seize, when, after giving His disciples the name of apostles and sending them to preach, He said: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:5-6). For, if He had not said and done this, He and His disciples, and if they had gone first to the nations, these ungrateful Jews, who resist the mouth of the Lord (1 Kings 13:14), as it is written, and who always fight against the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51) and oppose Him, would have said: "The prophets were sent to us, and they prophesied among us. And if this one had been sent to us, he would not go to the foreign nations, abandoning his compatriots."

Thus, as this wise physician and teacher led them in the manner that has been said and, as far as He was concerned, removed in advance the causes of their diseases—for it is not at all by force that He directs the free will of the soul—He taught them, healed them, was with them; and yet they insulted, blasphemed, persecuted. And, while these attempts at a healing conforming to the economy left them without excuse, when they found themselves henceforth without healing and without faith, a Canaanite woman full of faith approached Him. She represented the Church which is called among the very idolatrous nations (εἰδωλολάτρης), and she begged Him so that her daughter possessed by the demon might obtain healing, while by "daughter" is also understood the soul of each of the former infidels, which was possessed by the demon because of false opinions about God and because of shameful and abominable passions; it is for her that he who sings spiritually and prophesies at the same time prays, saying: “Deliver my soul from the sword, my

only one from the power of the dog" (Psalm 22:20); and again: "Rescue my soul from their wickedness, my only one from the lions" (Psalm 35:17). What, then, did Our Lord do? When He tested her faith as in a crucible, He did not answer (Matthew 15:23). And she, she clung more to supplication, went behind Him, ran before Him, cried out. Finally, He entered a house (Mark 7:24), and, while He wanted to hide, she pressed and insisted with Him; and, to speak simply, she asked by all means, by the exterior (ἔξωθεν), by the gait, by the voice, or rather (μᾶλλον) she had all this at the service of (her) ardent and burning soul; by this she also gained for her defense (συνήγορος) the disciples of Christ, who had also said to Him on the way: "Send her away, for she is crying after us" (Matthew 15:23).

But, when at this moment (Jesus) still held the same conduct toward the Jews and closed their grumbling mouth (γογγυσμός), He said: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). And yet it was not to them alone that He was sent, but to the whole human race (γένος), to them however in the first place (πρῶτον). Thus, indeed, Paul and Barnabas also, following their master, said to the Jews of Antioch of Pisidia who did not obey: "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us" (Acts 13:46-47). Because the centurion also was not a Jew, but from among the nations, (Jesus) also, of His own will, promised him the healing of (his) sick servant (Matthew 8:7), although (the centurion) had said nothing of the sort. From this (it follows) that, if He had immediately healed the daughter of this Canaanite woman who was possessed by the demon, He would have incurred absolutely no blame as a result of this action, once the Jews had been preferred, since to them also it was permitted according to the faith (πίστις) to admit among them those who were called proselytes, when they wanted to know the God of the Law (νόμος). But what seemed to give rise to an accusation (κατηγορία) was that, fully and from the beginning and even from the start, He hastened to leave the Jews aside and went to the nations and other cities, preoccupied with (this) action. This, He has also well observed; for example, the Samaritan woman and those who came out of her city (to come) to Him (John 4:30), as if in passing, He instructed them, as He is God and the universal savior of all men.

But, what I said: "As the unbelief of the Jews had now reached the last limit, He wanted to lay the roots of the faith of the Church which (was called) among the nations, which of its own will and with much ardor came to Him," and what Paul said: “Let us rather transfer the richness to the wild olive” (Romans 11:17), He showed by the figure (τύπος) of the Canaanite woman, who by a sign showed in advance and figured the Church, and spontaneously He said: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24). And when He rebuked the madness (μανία) of the Pharisees, who were the first to be scandalized and thought that He taught the way of life of the nations, because they had heard Him say: “It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man” (Matthew 15:11), and (when) He excited the faith of this (Canaanite woman), which He also inflamed and made particularly evident and very clear—for she worshiped, saying: “Lord, help me” (Matthew 15:25) and all that, as if He spoke to the woman who represented the person (πρόσωπον) of the Church that believed from among the godless nations—again He rubbed and polished her very magnificently, saying the same (words): “It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs” (Matthew 15:26). And yet, I have said it before, He absolutely said nothing of the sort to the centurion or to another pagan who believed; and He called the Jews "children," "little dogs" those who (belong) to the other nations, and "bread" the word of teaching, which is expressed not only by the words of life but also shown by the realization of miracles. And it is for no other reason that He said this to the (Canaanite woman), if not to make evident and certain by His own response that the reasonable and life-giving bread is justly taken from the Jews who were regarded as the children, and that it passes to the little dogs.

And see how the woman, when she was truly hungry like a dog, seized the word and was nourished by it immediately, on the one hand, after having taken for herself this injurious and true appellation—for she was a dog, (and) not a clean animal; for such are the nations that have not known God—and, on the other hand, after having said with joy: “Yes, Lord; for even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table” (Matthew 15:27); and with a leap she suddenly passed to the condition (ἕξις) of a child and drove away beforehand the synagogue of the Jews which was counted among the children. The master of the bread, indeed, made her partake of all the food in an abundant and copious manner, when He made her very desire the measure of (His) gift and said: “O woman, great is your

faith; be it done for you as you desire" (Matthew 15:28). But, once a female dog desires the crumbs, does she not ask to have also all the bread? She had it also in many ways, after the Jews were removed from it.

First, indeed, she ate the Heavenly bread which is set before us on the altar, not by gathering it from crumbs thrown and scattered on the ground, but by feeding abundantly from the spiritual and royal table, being fully satisfied and delighting, while the Jews who had formerly served in the tabernacle where the (rites) of the Law took place could not even "see the (bread)" (Hebrews 13:10), much less partake of it. And Paul is a witness to this, when he wrote to the Hebrews in these terms: "We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat". Then she ate the bread of the word of wisdom, the bread of the word of knowledge and, to speak simply, the (bread) that is heard and diversified—at the same time with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, this Canaanite woman, this female dog, she who needs a crumb, she whose faith is great, while the Jews heard the word that stripped them of all this: "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it" (Matthew 21:43). Indeed, it was a great faith that the great mystery of piety (εὐσέβεια) truly needed, and not the (faith) Jewish and small. He calls "kingdom of God" the (kingdom) where the intelligence itself must produce fruit, as well as all the richness of the Spirit which is found in the divine Books and which has passed to the Canaanite woman and the Church which (is) from among the nations, (riches) of which she has also produced the fruit, (namely) thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold (Mark 4:8), while the Jews have sunk into the letter without (producing) fruits. That is why the Egyptians in question, who are praised for their remarkable changes, did not teach their five cities to speak in the language of the Jews or in that of Israel, but in the language of Canaan. The sheep of the house of Israel, in fact, remained lost, while the Canaanite woman took the bread, she whose intelligent language the Egyptians envied, when they taught their five senses to speak in this (language) and imitated her noble thought, great faith, desire for the bread of life, in whatever way you want it to be understood, while they despised all that pertains to ostentation and leads to Jewish hypocrisy and deceit and, like laborious bees (μελισσουργός), worked in secret the spiritual honey in the hives of thought, feared the place of the Jews as the place of God, and did not bring to their language inefficiency. Isaiah, indeed, said in the same prophecy: "And the place of the Jews will be for the

Egyptians an object of fear” (Isaiah 19:17). We say "place" either the one that is seen as a place, or the one that is understood intellectually, which is the conduct that brings beautiful revenues, and the knowledge of the patriarchs and prophets presented in the Books, which it was necessary to fear and envy. But let us turn away from the lazy tongue that has denied Christ, and choose in its place the (tongue) of Canaan, or rather (μᾶλλον δέ) the language of the Church which is spiritual and learned.

Among these five senses, or five cities, sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, which the Egyptians, these workers of perfection, have changed into cities according to the evangelical laws (νόμος), this one city, he says, will be called the city of Asedek (Isaiah 19:18), which is according to the Septuagint "the city of justice," and according to others who taught differently "the city of Erès," which Symmachus—one of the translators—translated into Greek as "the city of the sun." And truly, someone will say: "Sight, which is more penetrating than the other intellectual senses for perceiving divine things—it is the visual and distinctive faculty of the soul—it is this that has been named 'the city of the sun,' when it shines by the grace from above." But to me, (this) seems quite different. And indeed, the prophet did not say: 'One among them will be called the city of Asedek'; but (he expressed himself) thus: “This one city will be called the city of Asedek” (Isaiah 19:18), so that a meaning of this kind is indicated, (namely) that these five cities, or senses, by conducting themselves in unison according to the same laws (νόμος), make the soul guarded and strengthened by them a single city of justice, so that these five separately are regarded as one collectively.

And this also, that he did not say: "One city," but: "This one city," with the small addition of this article (ἄρθρον), that is, of this (word) "this," shows a great significance of this meaning. And otherwise, when the other senses do what is just and lawful, what reason is there that it is not each of them, but only one of them that is surnamed "the city of justice"? By "justice" we must understand in the present case not that which is distinguished by its opposition to iniquity and injustice, but that which is general and perfect and contains all perfection, in the manner that Luke wrote concerning Zechariah and Elizabeth: “They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:6). Do not be surprised if, among the translators, some

have said: It will be called "the city of justice," and those "the city of the sun." And indeed, in these things as in those, no one suffices for all; but in matters pertaining to God, whatever they may be, each knows in part and speaks in part (1 Corinthians 13:9). However, when the Septuagint made the translation with (the help of) the Holy Spirit—for it is for this, although they translated separately, that they agreed with one another (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book XII, ch. 11)—while the others said: "The city of the sun," they, they said: "(The city) of justice," elevating our spirit toward the sun of justice, who is Christ (Malachi 4:2). Indeed, this visible sun is not the author of justice nor does it make just those upon whom it shines, although through it as through the other works one can measure and imagine the wisdom from above that brought them from nothingness into existence. It is concerning this rising of the sun of justice, I think, that throughout the prophecy concerning the Egyptians the prophet often said: “On that day there will be such (a thing) in Egypt” (Isaiah 19:18, 19, 23, 24), rightly giving the name of "day" to the time that follows such a rising; for it is not in a single day by chance that all these events took place for the Egyptians.

And I thought—believe me what I say—that the present discourse would suffice for all the questions I mentioned when I began to speak. But, after only one (question) has been discussed according to my weakness, I see that the homily will reach an immeasurable length if I speak on the others (questions). That is why it is on another day, as God permits, that what relates to the other (subjects) will be treated, and I will conclude what has been said by proclaiming blessed these five cities of the Egyptians, who learned to speak exactly in the language of Canaan and at the same time gave as a dwelling to the purified and perfect human soul the only city of the sun of justice. It is to its address that, singing with David, I say: “Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God” (Psalm 87:3); after having recognized, by what has been discussed, as Egyptians not only those who claim Egypt as the land of their fathers, but at the same time all those who have converted from the life of the nations, or (the life) pagan, to the conduct conforming to the Gospel. Now, what shall we say of our senses? Are they cities? Are they not all occupied by barbarians, since not a single spiritual law is in force among them? Do they not speak Egyptian? Do they know that the language of Canaan exists? Do they not spend their days in theaters, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching all the pleasures of sensuality and indulgence, so that ‘corrupt

streams flow' and rise up to the soul from every direction, as if through different channels? And let no one say to me, 'Again, you speak against the theaters.' For I will reply: I will speak again, and I will not cease to speak; I wish to persuade, O excellent one, by speaking. Indeed, shall I use force? No—you do in the theaters what you will, but I am not permitted in the church to say what I will. For if, even when I cannot persuade at once, I were to remain silent, great would be my punishment for silence, as well as the gravest danger. Yet it is not only those who dwell in the tent who act like Egyptians; so too do those with the envious eye, the insulting tongue, the inquisitive ear, the gluttonous palate, the lustful nose, the greedy and unjust hand that seizes what belongs to others. Woe is me! What shall we do if no slight change occurs, and if our cities appear before the tribunal of Christ behaving like barbarians? For it is certain that we will suffer the fate of barbarians, enduring unbearable torments. Let us hasten, then, to inscribe the laws of the Spirit upon each of our senses, so that when they are recognized as cities by the King, they may be subject to the kingdom of heaven. May we all attain this by the grace and love of Him who calls us! To Him be glory forever. Amen.

## HOMILY 108 ON THE OTHER QUESTIONS THAT HAD BEEN PROPOSED, WHICH THE HOMILY ITSELF WILL CLEARLY INDICATE TO FUTURE READERS. TABLE OF CONTENTS

You remember perfectly (πέντας), I know well, my promises, because you do not forget spiritual debts at all; but you claim very exactly those of this kind. That is why, by forcing myself also with great care, I have rushed to pay what was due formerly, before incurring a reproach of negligence and delay and of a prejudice which (would come) from there. Indeed, since this single question has been resolved, as I had the possibility, it is necessary for me to also come to the other (questions), on which the one who interrogated has emitted doubts or has pretended (σχῆμα) to emit them, by applying himself either to put me to the test or to draw a greater profit from (his) desire to learn (φιλομάθεια).

Therefore, after having invoked again the Wisdom of God, the unique, the first-born and coeternal to the one who engendered it, from which, as from a source, spread, flow and descend all science and (all) wise word, and after having asked and prayed it to stand near me and to help me, I approach the explanation. It will stand near me in all manners (means) and it will help me, when you, you will listen, you who drink from it for your part with purity and truth and are always thirsty, and (when) you will strike by a divine action my dry rock without humidity, like Moses (struck the rock) with the rod, and (when) you will make it give birth to great waters.

The second among the πρόβλεψις or propositions which were doubtful and difficult is therefore this one. In the Song of Songs, therefore — Solomon, as you know, also composed this book — what begins in the form of reasoning (λογικός) or discussion, is a conversation with responses between them, between the spouse and the spouse, which (conversation) figures in advance the mystery which (relates) to the Church and to Christ. For the spouse of Christ is the Church, and the spouse of this one is again Christ. And Paul shows that, when he wrote to the Ephesians, in these terms: Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church; and again according to this: The man will leave his father and his mother and will attach himself to his wife, and both will become one single flesh. This mystery is great, and I, I (say it), in relation to Christ and in relation to the Church.

But it is without any passion that the union of Christ with the Church takes place. And indeed the spouse, although she has become a spouse, is a virgin. And that, Paul again, by writing to the Corinthians, made it known by what he said: I have betrothed you to a single man, to present you before Christ [as] a pure virgin. If the spouse is a pure virgin, it is absolutely without passion and pure of all stain and of (all) blemish that their intercourse and their conversation between them are. Such is, indeed, also the bed from which he took her for carnal commerce. And what is this (bed)? Listen again to Paul who writes, and know clearly that it is The source of the bath of regeneration; for he says: He himself also, he gave himself for her, in order to sanctify her, after having purified her in the bath of the waters with the word, to present to himself the Church, glorious, without there being in her a stain or a wrinkle or something of the sort, but so that she may be holy and immaculate. Do you see that in everything there is cleanness, holiness, purity and exemption from all stain? Consequently, when we say and hear that, let no foolish thought enter yourself. In the Song of Songs, the spouse gives to the spouse also the name of "sister"; and she, she does not give to the spouse the name of "brother", but that of "son of my mother". And both signify a single parentage. When the Word of God was incarnate, indeed, it is in the same nature that he married the Church and that he participated in the same manner in the blood and in the flesh animated by an intellectual soul, when he resembled us in everything with the exception of sin. But why (the spouse) does she not give him the name of "brother", but that of "son of my sister"? It is because he was from the Mother of God (Θεοτόκος), the Virgin Mary, who is our sister to all, by descending from our same father Adam by genealogy (that is to say, precisely, inasmuch as son of our sister, that he was named "son of the sister" and that the spouse and the Church, that is to say we ourselves, give him the name of "son of the sister". He, it is therefore because of his charity (φιλανθρωπία) and not by need — how, indeed, (did he have need of it), he who by nature is Son and God of God? — that he was baptized with our baptism, when he sanctified the waters themselves, that he prepared them for us (as) bath of the adoption of children and that thus he made us sons of the Heavenly Father and consequently his brothers. That is why he gives to the Church, or to the spouse, the name of "sister", and that although he is himself the son of his sister. When therefore he loved her as (his) sister, in turn he is also loved by her. And just as he shed his own blood for her, likewise she also, when she is burned, when she is put in pieces, when she is torn by many torments, when... — what did she not

endure, indeed, from these unbearable (treatments)? — she endured for him the combats (ἀγών) of martyrdom full of pains and which are repulsive above all. For she was profoundly wounded in her heart by a Celestial love. That is why she also said: I have been wounded by love. She ascended, indeed, towards the first and great commandment, which says: You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your spirit. And that is not astonishing. Indeed she who erred, who was atheist, who had served bad passions and demons and (who) had no hope, has danced all at once towards the bed of the king, once she had received the dignity of sister and spouse, that she had in deposit these ineffable (goods) and that, to the extent that men grasp and to the extent that she could understand, she progressed little by little in science: what she also confessed herself with great joy and said: The king made me enter into his bedroom (κοιτών).

Therefore all the preface of the book, I mean of the Song of Songs, describes the sentiment of the soul which is wounded by the divine and passionless love and the intercourse of the conversation of God and of his very high and (very) elevated friendship, which leads and draws the one who loved him and is loved by him and makes her ascend, as much as it is possible, to the excellence of science, of contemplation (θεωρία) and of impassibility. That being thus, the one who posed these questions asked: "How, after the spouse knocked at the door and said: Open to me", the spouse says to him: I have taken off my tunic (χιτών), how would I put it back on? I have washed my feet, how would I soil them? Is it (ἆρά), indeed, with a view to some stain and (some) soiling that the spouse called her? And she who would go towards him was she going to touch something similar with her feet?"

Here is what we also say to this question: The spouse, that is to say the soul which watches and accomplishes the commandments and which plays the role (πρόσωπον) of the Church, before the spouse made this call to her and that she heard: Open, said: I, I sleep, and my heart watches! And indeed the one who was indifferent to the facts which (take place) in this world and closed his eyes before the deceit which (results) from the continuous flow of desires and before the imagination (φαντασία) which (comes) from the exterior, (who) turned himself entirely on himself and (who) looks inside, sleeps a praiseworthy sleep, when the movements of the soul and of the body which (lead) to sin are for him without effect and without action and that (his soul and his body) are fixed in the fear of

God first and then in (his) love, and he watches a divine watch in (his) intelligence, when he watches in the face of the ruses of Satan and of the wicked spirits, of which the Sacred Book says: For they will not sleep, if they do not do evil; their sleep moves away from them, without them sleeping. Such was Paul who slept a blessed sleep, or rather (μᾶλλον δέ) death, and cried: It is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me; and however he said in the state of wakefulness: So that we are not surpassed by Satan; for his designs do not escape us. This is the sense said by us that also shows what Paul sent to the Thessalonians in these terms: You all, indeed, you are children of the light and children of the day; and we are not of the night, nor of the darkness. Let us not sleep therefore (ἄρα) as also the others; but let us wake up and watch. And indeed those who sleep, it is at night that they sleep!

But the spouse, and the soul adorned with the ornament of the virtues, by sleeping the sleep of the day which does not partake of the night, (but) which is associated with the state of wakefulness, said also very justly: I, I sleep, and my heart watches. That is why, when she slept thus, the voice of the spouse however did not escape her. And indeed, even when he knocked at the door, she perceived (the noise) and said: It is the voice of the son of my sister; he knocks at the door. But, after having heard him say: Open to me, my sister, my relative, my dove, my perfect, in regard to this word of "perfection", she became weak and she delayed, now that she was named thus for the first time and while she thought what is moderate and humble and that she recalled that the spouse and the Master said to his disciples: When you will have done all that has been ordered to you, say: We are useless servants, because it is what we ought to have done that we have done.

On one hand, indeed, she was a dove, when she ascended from the banks of the Jordan and that she was clothed with all the grace of the Spirit who appeared under the form of a dove. And she had become a relative, because she attached herself to the spouse by carnal commerce, and it is with reason that she was named "relative". And that stemmed from a gift from above. That is why also a little before he had said to her: You are all beautiful, my relative, and there is no stain in you; for the bath of regeneration washed away in her every stain and every impurity, and rendered her all beautiful and (all) pure. On the other hand, this (word) of "perfection", which is regulated by the works of virtue and by the great actions and the exact observation of the commandments, indicates what does not

fail and what has arrived at the resemblance of God. And of that is witness our Savior himself, who said to his disciples in the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλια), after having instructed and warned them of what it was necessary to do: Be therefore perfect, as your Father who is in the heavens is perfect; and again he said to the Father in the form (εἶδος) of prayer for them: So that they may be one, as, we also, we are one: me in them and you in me, so that they may be those who are complete in one.

It is therefore to attest the perfection and to appear to have already arrived at the resemblance of God that the spouse also limped and that she did not run immediately at the voice (which called her), because she had learned humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη), and (that) although she showed to the spouse by experience itself that her heart was watching. Many, indeed, who threw themselves on such things without reflection (ἀνεξετάστως) and without examination (ἀδοκιμάστως) and lightly, were deceived by the Calumniator, who changes his exterior (πρόσωπον) into an angel of light and says like Simon: I am the power of God, that which is called the great. Is it not thus that he pushed up Adam and Eve, who lived the happy life in paradise, that he blew pride into them by saying: You will be like gods, that he made them (leave) paradise and that he showed them empty of God? It is therefore with wisdom and with vigilance that the spouse imagined, by not accepting the testimony of the perfection, to cry a word to the spouse as to a stranger and (to) the one who, because he names her "perfect", wants to deceive her and dupe her and exclude her from the royal bedroom (κοιτών) and from the bed. She knew, indeed, that she who would stand thus on her guard would please the spouse very much. That is why she also said: I have taken off my tunic (χιτών), how would I put it back on? I have washed my feet, how would I soil them?

"I, I know, she said, to have myself done nothing which merits a mention and which gratifies me with this word of 'perfection'. And one must not that someone accept for himself easily an appellation which goes beyond the truth of the facts, for fear that, when he will have accepted it, he strips it by ruse of what even belongs to him. But one must think that it is a temptation, a test and a deception. On one side, I have taken off my tunic (χιτών), that is to say the old man with his works, as Paul says, and I have washed my feet, when by the divine bath I shook off and made disappear the mud which had attached itself to them on the roads of sin, and that I took care that these (feet) no longer walk in the same (roads), I know

it. On the other side, if I believe myself perfect and that I throw myself on (this) appellation, I forget that, because I elevated myself towards pride and because I imagine myself to be that which I am not, I put back on the old tunic (χιτών), I walk in the path of the Calumniator and I soil my feet, because that one, he also, fell as a result of pride. What then! I will answer the word which is much wiser and I will say: I have taken off my tunic (χιτών), how would I put it back on? I have my feet, how would I soil them? In all cases (πάντος), upon hearing that, the spouse will make a more manifest and (more) clear call to me, and I will not fail."

And, when the spouse filled “with the greatest vigilance” has (thus) thought and spoken, she was not deceived in her hope. Indeed, she experienced immediately a divine sensation and she says: The son of my sister passed his hand through the opening, and my entrails were moved and leaped because of him. I rose to open to the son of my sister.

We are therefore instructed by that to not throw ourselves easily on divine calls, contemplations (θεωρίας) and revelations; but, although we see knocking at our door, which is the sensation of the spirit capable of experiencing such (sensations), it is with a prudent apprehension that we must hold ourselves back, flee with a bound and persuade ourselves clearly that we merit absolutely nothing of the sort. For the one who imagines meriting and who opens with eagerness forgets that he closes the door before the spouse by that very thing that he opens, and that perhaps he receives an enemy under the appearance (σχῆμα) of a friend. But he who is attentive and withdraws into what is moderate and humble will possess the spouse who takes his prudence by force, pushes his hand inside as through an opening and touches him then not superficially, but profoundly, so that his entrails too will quiver and be moved—and it is certain that what is in the spirit is much deeper—they who in truth can receive intellectual foods and who, because they digest, elaborate and understand very subtly and (very) finely what has been sent by the hand of God—these are the words by which the intellectual creature and the (creature) sensible came into existence—tremble, quiver and are astonished, and (who) are without strength even before a small part of the complete understanding. For, such is what illuminates by entering through the opening and yet suffices to illuminate even the depths of our spirit.

Thus the spouse, because she restrained herself with modesty and with timidity and experienced a respectful fear in thinking what is humble and moderate, drew to herself the divine hand through the opening and was in turn the obligation for her; and after having risen with confidence, she opened the entire door. Such was Moses who, to understand and make known the great words of God, called himself "he who has the feeble voice (ἰσχνόφωνος) and the heavy tongue (βραδύγλωσσος)", closed his door with a praiseworthy humility, supplicated and said: Designate another that you will send; and after he had been led by force and after he had opened his spirit entirely, he asked again and supplicated, saying: If I have found grace before you, show yourself to me; that I may see you clearly. It is in the same manner that Jeremiah also, when he said: (You) who are the Master the Lord (δέσποτα Κύριε), behold I do not know how to speak, because I am a child, felt the hand of God and wrote again: And the Lord extended his hand towards me and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me: Behold I have put my words in your mouth.

Where then (ἄρα) are those who, because they live tranquilly and remain constantly near the church, become proud, invent insanities or even mock, and say easily: "Such a saint stood by me during the night;" and: "Such a thing appeared to me;" and: "This was declared;" and: "That was commanded;" and: "It was revealed…;" — which is rather an old wives' tale. — Now a revelation which is greater than all, it seems to me, is to consider our own sins, to not forget our being, to not delude ourselves and to not give passage to the deception of demons.
Do we not see the spouse herself, that "kinswoman", that "dove", that "perfect one", while the spouse stood at the door, not throw herself upon him nor easily welcome his voice which she recognized, but lean towards humility?
If it is for nothing else, let us blush from her example.

And let no one, upon hearing this Solution said by us to “ a question and; a doubt, imagine that it is unlikely that the spouse, once she was united to the divine love of the spouse, was reserved and timid and fearful concerning the fall into the (disposition) contrary because of the danger (κίνδυνος) which was to come from it, thinking that the great Paul said that neither the creature which is seen, nor the (creature) invisible, nor any (creature) of this kind will be able to separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus Our Lord, and who wrote prudently again:

But I treat my body harshly and I hold it in servitude, lest after having preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Indeed, what is said by John: There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, looks at the fear of servants, when it is as a bad domestic and a lazy servant that he touches the works of virtue through fear of the decreed punishments and not through love for God. That is why it is to those who begin in the divine teachings and are going to taste wisdom and be led as very small children in the path of piety (προσέλωξ) that such a servile fear is profitable; for the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. Some, after having passed beyond this condition (κατά) of servant, in the hope of obtaining the honors which have been promised, put their care into accomplishing what is ordered, they who will be called "hirelings" instead of "servants". The third place is occupied by those who, looking at nothing of that, nevertheless do good for the good itself, (act) as those who love the Lord in person and have a pure and unmixed love and exempt from all that can exist.

Such was Paul, when he loved Jesus so ardently that because of the great effusion (of his love) he chose for himself to lose the one who was loved, to bring him many friends among those who did not believe; that is why he said: For I would pray to become myself anathema, away from Christ, for my brothers, my kinsmen (συγγενεῖς) according to the flesh. And that John says that love is exempt from servile fear, which dreads the decreed punishments, he will show it himself clearly. While saying, indeed, that perfect love casts out fear, it is immediately afterwards that he declares: Fear implies a punishment. Thus consequently love chases away and eliminates this fear, the (fear) servile, which is associated with the fear of the decreed punishments, (and) not the (fear) which implies a timidity full of reserve and assures the exercise of the virtues. That is why, when God established Adam in the life of the paradise (which was) exempt from sorrow, he placed him, says the Sacred Book, to cultivate it and (to) keep it. And it is to the disciples also that Our Lord, after having said: You are my friends, and I no longer call you servants, gave a little later this command, saying: Watch and pray, so that you do not enter into temptation.

Indeed, he who loves Jesus and is bound by the love he (has) for him is not for that incapable of changing into sin; and he did not arrive at all that naturally, according to the word of the infamous Lampetius, who swells with an immeasurably great

pride and who soils himself with the mud of desires; but (he arrived there) when he changed into good in a certain way and acquired its property in himself, when he looks on high and does not easily submit to what makes one lean and pulls downwards towards the fall, and that for that he needs however to be vigilant and moreover to unite the fear which guards. Indeed, he who does not have this (fear) lacks all good; that is why some sage also said: Great is he who has found wisdom. Yet he is not above him who fears God. The fear of the Lord surpasses all; he who possesses it, 'to whom will he be compared?

I have exposed that, explaining only the response, or the demand, of the one who interrogated; for (I did not do it) by minutely examining each expression of the verses which had been cited from the Song of Songs, the third question is this: "How, in the second (book) of Kings, in the enumeration of the generals (χιλίαρχοι) of the military forces of David, does the Book make mention of Abishai and express itself thus: This one was renowned among the three, more celebrated than the two, and he was their chief; and he did not attain to the three? What then is the meaning of these verses?" I, I say: When there were three among the other chiefs of whom the ancient exploits were cited, the renowned Abishai was the chief of these three, not when he was one of these three — as the one who interrogated thought — but another outside of these three; by the celebrity which (consists) in valor and in bravery, he surpassed the two, but not the third; for it is to that (word): He did not attain to the three. However he was their chief, because he was the son of Zeruiah, sister of David. Further down in the narrative, (the Book) says about Benaiah something greater in these terms: And that one also was renowned among the three valiant ones, when he was more celebrated than the three; and he did not attain to the three. And David appointed him to his guard. And that also has the same meaning. These three who had been put in the first rank before the generals (χιλιάρχοι), who were in great number, regarded Benaiah as the most renowned among them. And his renown was great with them; for he was more celebrated than the three, as more valiant than them and braver. However (it was) when he was compared with each “ of them separately and apart — for he could not “ approach the three together alone nor envisage a comparison with the three. — And that is what this (word) indicates: He was more celebrated than the three, and he did not attain to the three. That is why David also put him in charge of the guard of his body, as the one who surpassed all. The consequence is therefore this: When

there were five in all, Abishai on one side was chief of these three, as relative (συγγενής) of David, and that by surpassing in military virtue these two only, but by being inferior to the third. Benaiah on the other side, by passing above these three, however above each separately and not at once, and was set apart for the guard of the king, when he inspired confidence (ἐμπιστοσύνη) because of his ancient and brilliant exploits.

I will pass then now to the other question also — and it is thus that I will end the homily — when I will also say about it what comes to my weak spirit.
"Why does Jeremiah," he says, "curse the day he is born, and not only the day,-but also the man who announced to his father that a son was born to him?" To that we say this: It is not as one of those who in great number find themselves in a bad and anguished Situation as a result of misery and who are led by pusillanimity (μικροψυχία) to the (conditions) difficult and painful of this world that the prophet proclaimed that in a blasphemous manner, but it is as one who knew how to lament mysteriously and regard the common sufferings of our nature as what is proper to him that he approached the inaccessible depths of thoughts and that he touched hidden words. Because, in fact, (Jeremiah) had heard God say to him: Before you came forth from the womb, I sanctified you, I established you prophet for the nations, and that he found himself in virtue to such a degree that, when Christ questioned the disciples: Who do men say that I am? they said also in their responses that some in truth thought of him that he was Jeremiah, seeing that wickedness gave itself free rein and that sin prevailed over all men and that he himself could not resist it and stop its power which cannot be contained, to the point that he said also: All are disobedient, they who walk crookedly, in vain does he who works the silver strike, their wickednesses have not melted, he rises then to the cause, after having looked into the inaccessible depths, as I have said, of very inexpressible thoughts, and finds himself to have existed as a result of this existence and as a result of this carnal commerce with emission (of the seed), by which Adam knew Eve, his wife, after having been chased from the paradise of delights, as a result of which, after having conceived, she gave birth to Cain, (and) which was also preceded by the punishment of the curse, namely: I will multiply your pains and your groans; it is in pains that you will bear sons. That is why he mentioned also the first mother, saying: The day where my mother gave birth to me. And indeed it is the first who was sick with sin, after having accepted the

deception of the serpent and having transgressed the commandment, which was also followed by the childbirth of every woman. "It is therefore," he says, "as a result of this existence that I am, from which no one, since he is born as a result of it, can tear out the sin from its principle and from its roots. Cursed therefore be this day where I was born, this day where my mother gave birth to me."

It is in a prophetic manner that (Jeremiah) made these reflections, when he looked towards that childbirth, that (childbirth) extraordinary (ξένος), from the violation of entire persons that the women, and the fruit which (is) in the entrails is blessed: and to the shepherds by the angel: Behold I announce to you a great joy, which will be for the whole world, that there is born to you today a Savior, who is the Christ the Lord, in the city of David. That it is by looking from afar towards this mystery that Jeremiah said " that, what follows will show very clearly. What did he say, in fact? Cursed be the man who announced to my father, saying: A male son is born to you? What indeed? Was it not enough to say: A son? But was it necessary to add again: Male? Yes certainly, because he had sight of the mystery that I said and that what was said is not said simply. Indeed, because God had put the male in the first place before the female, inasmuch as he is strong and the chief, so that, led by strength, the whole (human) species (γένος) might propagate itself in good health — for he made them male and female! say the Scriptures inspired by God — and that what (was) the order (γένος) has been overturned and that the female became the chief for the male concerning sin, so that (this one) said to God in a miserable manner: The woman, that you gave me, gave me herself from the tree, and I ate of it, from then on all those who were born by virtue of the power of the one who (was) inferior were females, and (there was) absolutely no male, because they were enervated, feminized and paralyzed by lack of virile and natural energy. And no one was born, who could completely conquer sin and death, which because of that had power over all nature, until Christ was born, who is properly speaking male, the second Adam, the strong God, who shook off the tyranny (τυραννίς) of sin.

And take me Isaiah, who indicates that clearly by that very fact that he predicted the extraordinary character of the virginal childbirth, which did not know the ordinary mode of the pains of childbirth, since the bond of virginity remained without being able to be cut. He also wrote thus: Before she who gives birth gives birth and before the pain of the pains of childbirth comes, she has let escape and

she has given birth to a male. This (word): She has let escape, proclaims the extraordinary character, namely that, when he came through the intermediary: of nature, he existed outside the limits of nature above intelligence and word, when he escaped from the virginal bonds by running and that he came out of them by slipping, and that when he became incarnate from the Virgin and that he accomplished entirely all the time of the pregnancy, and that without change he was of the same essence (οὐσία) as us according to the flesh, "and when he is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) to the Father in that he is God; and in truth, after the transgression of Adam, he is the only one who is born male. Indeed, if what is said by Jeremiah did not relate to this sense, it would be very ridiculous also to say: A male son is born to you. For who is he who has intelligence who, in the proper sense, will imagine a female son and not male?

When therefore the prophet was in astonishment, that he was rapt in his spirit, that he was entirely in admiration, that he had pity and that he suffered for our nature, because it had fallen into softness, he said that cursed be he who falsely named him "male son". And indeed no one is male if not Christ. And it is known beforehand that he who lies, even if no one curses him, incurs the reproaches of lying; for it is written: You will destroy all those who speak lies? And there was no one who brought this news to the father of the prophet and said: A male son is born to you; for there was no one who could rise to that thought. That if, after having known, he thus announced by lying, he submitted himself to the curse, because the name of "male" which suits Christ alone, "it is to me," he says, "that he imposed it; for it was necessary for him, when he knew the truth, to bring upon me also a sentence of death and to appear to kill me by that." We were all, in fact, under the curse, the object of a condemnation to death, because, according to the word of Paul, death reigned, from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned, that is to say over those who conducted themselves according to the Law (νόμος) of Moses, until Christ came, he who came in an astonishing manner through the intermediary of our nature, was born male from the Virgin, made us participate in that (condition) and removed us from the childbirth which gave birth to females, and made us pass to the spiritual regeneration, which (takes place) by the waters and the Spirit, so that it is not from blood, nor from the will of the flesh, nor from the will of man, but from the living God, that are born those who are such, (namely) males, in whom there is absolutely no trace of the sin which feminizes. Before this

gift was granted to us, while we were all sick with the feminization, we were born for death, so that it was better for each not to come into this world and to have preferably as a tomb the womb of she who gave birth to him, according to what is said by the prophet. And indeed Our Lord also said of Judas, who fell from the true life: It would be better for that man that he had not been born. One must admire, because of the one and same Spirit of the divine Books, that Job also, after having used like Jeremiah a similar species (εἶδος) of mysterious groanings, arrived at the same expression, saying: Perish the day where I was born, and the night where one said: Behold a male. For no one properly says "day" that where nature made lose the masculine dignity, but (he says it) "night". Thus consequently each of those who were mysteriously in affliction was because of that in affliction and in groanings.

But someone will say: "He should not have cursed the day itself, but rather (μάλλον) the sin, because of which we are, in our fall, descended to that (depth)." — But no one who has intelligence formulates this blame, on seeing the motive which is added. It is not indeed, the day itself, by that very fact that it is day and by nature is temporary, as one could say, that he says bad or worthy of curse or of perdition, but it is the sin which took place there, just as also because of those who committed there an action which soils a place is called "soiled". Thus it is possible to find that that is also written in the book of Leviticus, where (God) speaks of illegitimate unions: Because it is by all that that the nations which I make perish from before you have soiled themselves. And the land was soiled by it! And in another place he calls the same land "holy" and "land of the patriarchs" and which makes milk and honey flow, because of the difference of those who inhabited it, although the land remains constantly in the same nature as much for evil as for virtue.

The same thing is seen again concerning time and days. Paul, writing to the Galatians, says: So that he might deliver us from this present evil age; and to the Ephesians again: When you redeem the time, because the days are evil. And he who said that exclaimed, writing to the Corinthians: Behold now the time is favorable (εὐπρόσδεκτος); behold now the day of salvation. Thus consequently the same age and the (same) time and the (same) days, as long as they are called in relation to the wicked, are bad and worthy of curse; and, as long as they (are

called) in relation to those who practice virtue, (they are) salutary and good. Therefore Jeremiah and Job cursed the day through the intermediary of which masculinity became lying and all that was born was feminine. Thus consequently it is the mode and the cause of sin which are under the curse, and not the day itself. That what Job will say of the (day): May darkness take it! May it no longer be in the days of the year! May it no longer be counted in the days of the months! trouble no one. For that is said in a prophetic manner rather than (μᾶλλον ἢ) under a (μορφῇ) depreciatory form. And indeed truly it is when this age ends that every day which belongs to time will end and cease to be counted in the days of the months and years, when the course (of time) stops and that the last light will from then on take its place, (light) which will be given as a share and inheritance with the blessed and endless life of the just, which will no longer be shared or divided into nights and days. This present time, where we are now, also turns on itself in seven days, while each of the days is not one and another and one does not present a difference in relation to the other, but while a single one is all and it turns seven " times, he who, upon reaching the term and the limit and stopping when he will have finished, will be hidden in the darkness, according to what is said differently by the prophets, and there will happen other things terrible and frightening because of the fright of the judgment. We hear, in effect, Isaiah who says: The heavens will be rolled up like a book, and all the stars will fall, as leaves fall from the vine and as leaves fall from the fig tree; and also Joel who writes: The sun and the moon will be obscured together, and the stars will not give their light. A clear sign of the fact that, on the subject of this day, Job says in a prophetic manner (words) similar to those which those (have said) under the form (σχῆμα) of curse, is what he said next: May he curse this day, he who curses, he who must tame and subdue the great fish (κῆτος)! And what is this great fish (κῆτος), if not the Calumniator, the ancient serpent, the doctor of sin, who exercised the tyranny (τυραννίς) by the humidity of our desires and swam with much authority and security (ἀσφάλεια) and who thus became a great fish (κῆτος), that, according to the word of Paul, Our Lord will exterminate then by the breath of his mouth and annihilate by the brightness of his advent, saying equally to those who have lived in sins: Go away from me, cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Calumniator and for his angels. Thus consequently this day is said cursed because of those who there receive the punishment of the curse.

And so, neither Jeremiah nor Job was in affliction and cursed, when he was vanquished as a result of a certain pusillanimity (μικροψυχία) and of a vile and ignoble discouragement, and that, as if he blasphemed against God, he pronounced a curse against this day, but, as I have said, when he lamented mysteriously the general suffering of human nature and was in affliction. And it is by that that this is clear, by what Jeremiah, before cursing the day, made the praise of the action of thanks ascend towards God. It is written, indeed: Sing to the Lord, praise him, because he has delivered the soul of the unfortunate from the hand of the wicked. Where can one believe that the same one sings the praise of the action of grace and that he blasphemes? Therefore, after having ourselves heard that, let us pray so that God may be merciful for our sins, we who, after the manifestation of God and the coming of our Savior the Christ and after having obtained the birth from above and having again received from it vigor (εὐτονία) and strength, do nothing male, but all that is feminine and which (is) full of softness, being certain that one understands by "softness" that a passion completely vanquishes us. But I cease to speak of much. That is why let us put our care into converting ourselves and considering who we are and for whom we came into existence, lest that, by being something else, we appear what we are not before the tribunal (βῆμα) of Christ, who made man in his image and likeness. To him (be) the praise in the ages! So be it!

**HOMILY 109 THE FIFTH CATECHESIS WHICH WAS PRONOUNCED ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOM ON WEDNESDAY OF THE WEEK OF THE PASSION OF THE SAVIOR.** TABLE OF CONTENTS

It is a habit for those who perform the service of the divine word and of (its) commandment, and who have understood with intelligence (whom they serve), being given what they are, and have not betrayed with pride the (word): "Know thyself", or the (word): "Consider thyself", to not bind themselves to that which they are called and received (to this charge) and (yet) to serve God. But (they have the habit) to enclose themselves more (πολλόν) in modesty and timidity and in what is humble, to say in no way what comes to their mind thus simply and what seems good to them and to speak in no way in a disordered (ἀτάκτως) or indeterminate or inconsiderate (ἀνεπιστάκτως) manner, but to pay attention to this one, (that is to say) to the one who has called them and made them approach, to the one who has sent them, to the one who has commanded (them), and to have their eyes which are not haughty and which do not stray, so that they do not promenade them here and there, but that they are immobile in their gaze, that they fear and tremble and that they question themselves why it is asked of (their) tongue to perform this service.

It is thus that the great Moses, when he heard God (say): “Go now, I will send you to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and you will bring out my people, the children of Israel, from the land of Egypt”; said first: “Who am I to go to Pharaoh, king of Egypt?” But, as he was constrained to accomplish what had been ordered to him, he obeyed, because by modesty he even honored what is moderate, knowing well that there is reproach in exceeding everywhere the legitimate bounds; and then, making little of himself and showing himself with a finger so to speak, he said: “Behold, I, I will go to the children of Israel and I will say to them: The God of your fathers has sent me to you”. "When, I, I look at myself, I am embarrassed," he said, I who am going to say myself to all this people: “The God of your fathers has sent me to you”; I weigh my weakness in comparison to the greatness of the words that I am ordered to say, and I am very frightened. And indeed immediately those towards whom I am going to direct myself will say very well: It is the God of our fathers, you say, to you, who sent you to us? Consequently tell us what his name is. “What shall I say to them?” And then, after (Moses) had learned what he must say and

what he could scarcely hear himself, he carried himself prudently to what he had to do. And Moses (acted) thus. As for me, when I cannot even this, (that is to say) know God purely by the spirit, much more obtain also (his) language and his conversation, and when sin closes (my) ears and my lips, after I have shown you previously the very signification of this present holy day, I said to him, my face bent down, not at all with the mouth — for that seemed audacious — but with the heart which hides itself and is ashamed to say: “What shall I say to them?” and (which) takes courage by its very silence? To cry out, (I said to him): These, what do they hear? and indeed it is in your name that they will be gathered; and then in truth, then I imagined that I heard speak one of the sacred voices, which came out from the deep inner without becoming proud, of one of these magnificent (voices), which mock and amuse themselves with those who become proud for nothing: "Go, make known the very Trinity by the facts and by the names. For if there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, there will absolutely (πάντος) also be one and the same preaching, and there will not be one and another, so that that which one will say to be a new or unusual thing is not at all an example of accusation (κέντρος), but that condemned it also falls under great reproaches. Or do you not know that Paul, when he was correcting again the Corinthians whose palate was wide open before vanities and who were led astray here and there by false apostles, said: “For in truth, if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or (if) you receive another Spirit which you have not received or a Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον) which you have not embraced, you bear it well?” Although, in fact, someone often launches himself to say something new, it is not more another Spirit that he will create and that he will teach — for it is the same that gives to him who gives to all abundantly — and he does not go either above the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον)."

And, hearing that, after having again bent my face down much more than before — and I cannot (say) what man I am — and in praying, in supplicating and in reflecting, I said: I am conscious that I must preach the same Trinity and I know to enclose it in the same dogmas by means of terms more defined than the minutes (the three) of geometry (including). But this, (that is to say) by where I will begin in the preaching, it is impossible for me (to say). The listeners, in fact, love that your word consists not in one or two (considerations) taken from among those which have already been exposed, but magnificently still in all the numerous

discoveries and thoughts of the Book “ inspired by God, like a sea overflowing with the grace which (is) in you. May I obtain by my prayer” that (God) makes a drop of it fall upon me, and that it becomes a great river, and that it spreads and overflows over the banks of my (which is) dry torrent!

Furthermore, on this subject again, it seemed to me to hear: "Are you thus in need and do you suffer from the hunger which (carries) on the science of divine things? Then that an abundant table is served before you, can you not only extend your hand and present a food to the mouth? Do you not hear the sacred words which command you: “Open your eyes, and satisfy yourself with breads?” For such are the breads of the intellectual nourishment, which are eaten by the contemplation (θεωρία) of the eyes of the spirit, just as by the mouth.

What! Have you asked, and have you not received? Have you sought, and have you not found? Have you knocked, and have I not opened to you? Of that, in fact, either you have done nothing, or, when you have done (something), you have not done it as it should. However why then are you still in need? Why are you in straits with all this wide place? Why are you poor with a great wealth? Do not go far away; the word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, says somewhere the Holy Spirit. With what you have recalled, make a perfect instruction on the consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) Trinity. For, after Moses had been sent into Egypt towards the Israelites and he was asking: “What shall I say to them?” pay attention to the tenor of the divine expressions which have been said to him, consider, understand, search, and you will meet the light itself."

And, after that had been said in a manner both charitable (φιλανθρώπως) and which suits God (θεοπρεπῶς), I ran — in spirit only — towards the words which had been revealed to Moses; and, before meeting them or plunging my intelligence into them, it is the light which meets me first. Come, you yourselves associate with me and be enlightened with me, and let us produce in public the revelations which in themselves are full of theology (θεολογία).

They are thus (who speak of persons) — that the person (πρόσωπον) also, in fact, be mentioned for the explanation of that which is in question — without considering that, when it is a question of him who is without body, neither the

external form (μορφή) nor the delimitation, which (exist) when it is a question of bodies, are associated at the same time with the indication of the person (προσώπου)? But if (God) wanted such to be this opinion and that the divinity was limited to a single hypostasis according to the obscurity and the smallness of spirit (μικροψυχία) of the Jews, when the truth did not present itself to him in a different manner, after having said: “He who is”, and: “The God of your fathers”, he had no need to add another thing. That if he proposed to also make mention of the patriarchs nominally, because he attracted the future listeners to the love of God and to the perfection of their first fathers, he needed to say then: "The God of your fathers Abraham and Isaac and Jacob." Now, in making known very clearly the distinction and the "non-confusion", and at the same time the equality of honor (ἰσοτιμία) and the "non-difference" in whatsoever of the three hypostases, it is with great care that he adds then, and in making known and in showing well everything: “The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob”.

(προσωπικῶν) — indeed, the person (πρόσωπον) also, in fact, be mentioned for the explanation of that which is in question — without considering that, when it is a question of him who is without body, neither the external form (μορφή) nor the delimitation, which (exist) when it is a question of bodies, are associated at the same time with the indication of the person (προσώπου)? But if (God) wanted such to be this opinion and that the divinity was limited to a single hypostasis according to the obscurity and the smallness of spirit (μικροψυχία) of the Jews, when the truth did not present itself to him in a different manner, after having said: “He who is”, and: “The God of your fathers”, he had no need to add another thing. That if he proposed to also make mention of the patriarchs nominally, because he attracted the future listeners to the love of God and to the perfection of their first fathers, he needed to say then: "The God of your fathers Abraham and Isaac and Jacob." Now, in making known very clearly the distinction and the "non-confusion", and at the same time the equality of honor (ἰσοτιμία) and the "non-difference" in whatsoever of the three hypostases, it is with great care that he adds then, and in making known and in showing well everything: “The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob”.

For, if it were not thus and (if) also these (notions) of theology (θεολογία) did not stop at the Trinity only, it was necessary to add: "And the God of Joseph". (Joseph)

was, in fact, he too, the one who is dear to him from the swaddling clothes, who surpassed his first fathers by the virtues, who by the chastity (opposed) to the flame of adultery took part in the combat, to the point of wanting to endure numerous deaths, to which it would have sufficed also, rather than serve once the (bad) desires, and who was pushed by God, was filled with the wisdom from above, knew the secrets, made known in advance what was to (happen) and as if he was looking at the facts themselves, who had received the first dignity of Egypt in recompense for his wisdom, and copiously nourished the people of his family, Israel, which outside the borders of its country had immigrated there having the famine, and (nourished) this foreigner (ξένος) in the resemblance of a fellow citizen, and predicted to him again (his) return into the country of his fathers. Why then has he passed under silence the one who is so renowned and (so) illustrious? For God was also his God, just like that of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, because of the familiarity which (comes) from the love of God (φιλοθεΐα) and which (results) from the rest of the perfection — and perhaps it is the same thing to say the love of God (φιλοθεΐα) and the perfection in general. — “That is why also the prophet who sings (addressing) God said: You who shepherd Israel, pay attention, you who lead Joseph like a sheep. Thus God was equally the God of Joseph, so that consequently what he has said: The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob — and he stopped the enumeration at three — was of theology (θεολογία), and (a theology) particularly exact, and not a simple mention of the First fathers.

And even the addition of the articles (ἄρθρα) placed before the names brings us an important and very great proof of that. In fact, he did not say: "God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob", but about each of them with care: “The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob”, in order to make known a definite, distinct and proper image (εἰκών) of each of the hypostases and which belongs to it without mixture in what is proper, so that the three do not merge and do not disappear into one, and (which) does not divide the identity of essence (οὐσία).

And indeed although it belongs to the Father as special, proper and without mixture that he is Father and that he is not begotten by anything else, and to the Son similarly that he is Son and that he has shone as splendor by generation, but

with the equality of eternity, and that he was begotten by the Father in an ineffable manner and above intelligence, and to the Holy Spirit also similarly that he is Holy Spirit and that independently of time and without interruption he is not begotten, but proceeds from God and Father, and (although) this property is in each of them in a fixed manner and in turn does not pass to another — for that is what is proper to properly speak — however one is the divinity in the three and the identity of essence (οὐσία) which is removed from all change.

How, in fact, is it possible for us to think that he who has been begotten by the Father or (he who) has proceeded from him is not proper “ to his essence, but that he is foreign (ξένος), coming from outside and exterior. In fact, if they do not have part with him in the essence (οὐσία), let one not say that he has been begotten nor that he has proceeded. But when one calls by his name the generation and the Son who is begotten and when one publishes the procession of God and when one designates by his name the Holy Spirit who proceeds, how can I reject names which proclaim the community of nature or of essence (οὐσία), say other from the point of view of the essence (οὐσία) the one who has begotten and define according to another nature the Son who has been begotten, or separate the Holy Spirit from the one from whom he proceeds in a manner which suits God (θεοπρεπῶς), just as no one says that the river which comes out of a source belongs to another nature than that of the source?

In fact, what did the one who spoke to Moses say? He had ordered to say: “I am he who is”; and: “He who is has sent me”; and: “The Lord, the God of your fathers”. Thus, after by these names: "He who is", "The Lord", "God", he has put forward the unity, he introduces immediately, on the spot, following that, the triple indication of the hypostases: “The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob”, so that the (word): "He is", and the (word): "The Lord", and the (word): "God", extend to each of the hypostases similarly and with equality of honor (ἰσοτίμως). For there is also the Father, there is also the Son, there is also the Paraclete (Παράκλητος), that is to say the Holy Spirit. Let no one, in fact, by ignorance make little of this last because of the form of the appellation which is in the neuter (οὐδέτερον), that is to say neither masculine nor feminine, but in another gender (γένος) than those, because God, and Father equally has been named Spirit: for “God is Spirit”, he says, and those who adore him, it is in Spirit and in truth

that it is necessary (to adore him). In the same manner, and the (word): "The Lord", and the (word): "God", pass to the three hypostases. And just as the Lord is the Father, just so the Lord is the Son equally, the Holy Spirit equally. And again God will not be thought the Father otherwise, the Son otherwise, the Spirit otherwise. And when one is the essence (οὐσία) in the holy Trinity, thus also the lordship and the divinity, because it is before the three hypostases that have been put in the first place with equality of honor (ἰσοτίμως) the (word): "He who is" and the (word): "God" and the (word): "The Lord", how Arius, who has become vain furious against the truth, has he dared to say: "There was a time when the Son or the Holy Spirit were not"; and: "From what is not he has been made"? And indeed he who is, who is to properly speak, is always, given that neither the beginning nor the end limit for him the fact that he is. That if he was not formerly, even as in a point of a small part of eternity or, so to speak, of a lapse of time, this very name: "He is", has failed him, and he has declared it false. And indeed he who (is) thus is, not because he is; but he is, because he has been brought and has passed to what he is, even if one gives for certain that he has preceded during a small instant of time which is not defined because of its brevity. And indeed he who is is without any limit, and (is) infinite; and he encloses all, and is not himself enclosed by anything.

Consequently he who has said in general: “I am he who is”, (who) has thus marked and made known by defined marks the "non-confusion" of the three hypostases and (who) has put lower: “The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob”, has made disappear from the holy Trinity the (word): "There was a time when he was not", which is of Arius and of his sectators. In the same manner, the (word): “The Lord, the God of your fathers”, which is similarly put in the first place before the three, (that is to say the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob), "has excluded equally their other theology" (θεολογία).

And so, again by what we have said at the instant it is evident for all that God is known and in the unity and in the Trinity, as, he too, he has made it known in speaking to Moses, in the unity because of the identity of the essence (οὐσιότης), of the lordship and of the divinity, and again of the will, of the power, of the Operation, of the royalty, of the glory, of eternity, to speak simply, of all that is understood and said of God, and in the Trinity because of the property and the "non-mixture" of the hypostases. When therefore by a profound thought you will

grasp, or imagine, the Trinity, say one single God, not in that you mix and confuse the hypostases, but in that you know one the divinity in them three, as well as the rest which indicates the community and the identity, But when “ you will look in a determined manner towards the Father, or for example towards the Son, or, if it happens, towards the Holy Spirit, and that you (will) call him "God", or "(He) who is", or "The Lord", or someone of these (names) which are common to the holy Trinity, you call him well. However let the property be for you associated (with the community). And call God inasmuch as the Father, not because he is from something, but because he is without generation. And in the same manner name the Son and "God". (and) "The Lord", and "(He) who is", because he has been begotten by the Father eternally. And in the same manner praise the Holy Spirit by the same appellations equal in honor (ἰσότιμοι), not as he who is from something or is begotten, but as he who proceeds from the Father. Let the properties be immutable in opposition with the indications and the common denominations; and also that which belongs to the community — it is the same thing — remains inseparable in opposition with the properties. You have said these three; ascend rapidly towards this one in a collective manner. You have imagined this one; understand these three in a separate manner. Stop the confusion of the Jews and of Sabellius, that of the three, and the pagan division of Arius, that of the one.

You have heard (God) say: “I am he who is”. Consequently confess: "He is"; and do not research: "What is he from the point of view of the essence (οὐσία)?" And indeed it is not possible for you to find it. When you have thus heard: "The Father", because he is not from something, and: "The Son", because he is begotten, and: "The Holy Spirit", because he proceeds from the Father in an unimaginable manner, do not scrutinize minutely what is the mode of these (operations), (so) that they are thus; for it is inconceivable and incomprehensible, and which is well known only of the holy Trinity. In fact, let him who wants (to know) explain this: "What is God from the point of view of the essence (οὐσία)?" and then he will scrutinize: "What is the divine generation and the procession?" These (Operations) would not be divine, if their mode itself was conceivable for our spirits. For the sole fact that we know and praise a perfect Trinity, which appears in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit, no one would ever understand it or speak of it, if this one of the holy Trinity, this Son and Word, this image of the invisible Father, had not become incarnate and had not become man for us without change, and if

he had not revealed what concerns him himself as well as the Father and the Holy Spirit, as in a small drop and (according) what we could bear. It is he who has filled all that is under the heavens with a light and a divine science, and it is by him that, when we ascend rapidly to the words of the prophets and to the visions of the just of former times, we find manifestly this divine and salutary doctrine which is ours, which, before that the Unique, The Word, rose, passed for being hidden in the prophecies or in the visions as in the shadow and in the mystery. It is thus that this sun of justice, in illuminating by (his) coming according to the flesh, us has prepared to see clearly as in full light these unknown and invisible (Operations). That is why also these (notions) which had been revealed to Moses, of which we have spoken and with the aid of which we have shown an exact theology (θεολογία), would not besides show themselves, if the Son and the Word himself had not appeared formerly as in a figure (τύπος), which represented in advance the great and divine mystery of the incarnation. What say, in fact, the Scriptures inspired by God? “The angel of the Lord appeared to (Moses) in a flame of fire, from the midst of the bush; and (Moses) saw that the bush is enflamed by the fire, and that the bush is not consumed. Moses said; I will pass to see this great vision, why the bush is not consumed, When the Lord saw that he was approaching to see, the Lord called him from the midst of the bush”. And how does he say: “The angel of the Lord appeared to (Moses) in a flame of fire, from the midst of the bush”, (and), on the subject of the same (fact): “The Lord called him from the midst of the bush”? How is the same "the angel of the Lord" and "the Lord"? For the very name of "Lord" is foreign to all that (is) after God, and it is to him alone truly that it suits. In fact, somewhere the prophet David also sings addressing him in these terms: “And let them know that your name is the Lord, inasmuch as you are the only Most High over all the earth”.

That which is put before our eyes shows us therefore that the Son was the one who appeared in the bush, the image of the Father living and presenting no difference (ἀδιάφορος), the one who shows in himself and makes known exactly the one who has begotten him, in the manner of a true image (εἰκών), and inasmuch as he is the elevated Word, the intelligence which is above all, the one whom the prophet Isaiah has called because of that the Son and the angel of the great counsel, in saying: “Because a child is born to us and a son is given to us; and his name is called: The angel of the great counsel, the wonderful counselor, the strong God”.

Who is it who would not admire the clarity of the sacred Scriptures, which so to speak does violence to make ascend the poverty of the words and the speeches from among us, up to the height of the divine thoughts, and, what a word cannot enclose, supplies it by another. In fact, because he has said the (Son) "the angel of the great counsel", inasmuch as the image and the Word of the intelligence which (is) above all, and that thus he shows the one of whom he is the Word, so that no one however, because of this designation "of angel", inclining to a sense which carries: envy to the earth, regards him as minister of the Father, he has said then "the admirable counselor"; "he is," he says, "the associate of the thought, and not (his) minister." In fact, what association is there not between the Word and the intelligence? Or rather (μᾶλλον δέ), to speak briefly, it is the identity in all and the adhesion by excellence. For he is, he too, God, (the God) strong. It is therefore he who appeared to Moses in the bush that the word shows "the angel of the Lord" and "the Lord". And how did he appear? In a flame of fire, he says, from the midst of the bush, while the bush is enflamed and is not consumed. Where are those who say: "How did God unite himself to the flesh? How did the incorporeal join itself to the body?" When the prodigy represents this mystery, let it be for you more evident, (more) clear and more (manifest) than all proof. In fact, how did the wood become visible with the fire at the same thing? How did it support the assault of the flame? How were they one single thing, this (wood) and this (fire) which by nature are in discord between them? And indeed he did not say that the (fire) illuminated, or that it shone around the (bush), or (that it blazed that the fire appeared above the bush, but that the bush was enflamed and was not consumed. "In all the bush," he says, "there was a fire which had introduced itself and had slipped itself. And the (bush) had become a burning coal, and it was entirely on fire, and (it was) the fire itself. And there did not remain to it henceforth, if it advanced according to its nature, but to be reduced to ash and (to) dust; for that is what shows evidently this (word): “It was not consumed”.

It is therefore in a manner similar to this prodigy that the Word of God, he too, united himself to our flesh which has an intellectual soul, when he united himself to it hypostatically, beyond all speech, because that is what he wanted. Such are, in fact, the marvels, that on one side they are believed because they have taken place and that they have as proof greatly sufficient this very fact of being marvels and of not being entirely accessible to our spirits, and that on another side they surpass the

weakness of an investigation supported on reasoning and examination, so that they remain still marvels. Let a Jew or a pagan, in fact, explain what is the reason of this (word): “The bush was enflamed, and it was not consumed”; and that he asks me then to expose to him the mode of the divine union of the Emmanuel. That if that which was seen by Moses and fell under sensible eyes is an ineffable affair, what will one say about the union of God the Word with the flesh, which appears to the intelligence alone, and that as long as it is inaccessible to us? Furthermore, you yourself, you have ecstasized on the theology (θεολογία) of John, by which he makes resound this (word): “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word”, which have admired some even of those who have a high idea of pagan wisdom; but you do not believe this (word): “The Word was made flesh, and he dwelt among us”. And however the one who acted in him so that he says that acted (so that he says) also this. For it did not belong to a fisherman and to an ignorant to make resound such (words), but to the Christ who spoke in him; and besides it is not either probable that the same is pushed by God to half, and that he hears that from heaven and says it and that he forms this from the earth and invents it.

But again the bush attracts me towards it, and I am possessed by (this) image. And in fact, just as the fire has made of it a burning coal, that it was deemed to be one single thing with it, that it was united to it in an indivisible manner — for how would one separate the flame which burns in the wood? — that it did not make it change into the nature of the fire, that it did not pass itself to the fact of becoming the bush, although it had introduced itself and had slipped itself into all the (bush), that it left nothing that it had not made of fire, to the point that the (bush) also does what (belongs) to the fire, namely burn and illuminate, as long as it remains enflamed and is not consumed and that what appears is a burning coal, (namely) one single thing of two which do not resemble each other from the point of view of the nature, without being divided into two; in the same manner, it is by delicate reflections that we see that the Word of God united himself to our humanity — it is certain that it is to the flesh animated intellectually — divinely and above intelligence, in such a manner that he does not change the flesh into his own nature and that he is not either himself transformed into the flesh; but he is one single hypostasis of the two and one single incarnate nature of the Word, although the things from which he has been reunited or one single are not confused, while the

body has not been changed from the point of view of the nature and that by the union by excellence with the Word it is the same thing for the one who (can), whether he gives life, whether he heals. And we have said that, after we have been led by force as well as by a delicate thought. In fact, one can find that the Word who has become incarnate and has become man without change and " without division, does everything, what suits God (θεοπρεπῶς) and what belongs to man; and no one says that the Word of God has done this and the human nature that; for that is the difficulty of the mystery. It is necessary to know with wisdom and with intelligence that other is the one who operates, and other the operation, and other the work; and these things are very far from one another. For the one who operates is the one who moves to do something; the operation is, so to speak, that operating movement and the impulsive intention that drives to it; the work is what is accomplished by means of the latter. From this I will produce Basil as a witness, wise in divine matters. Indeed, the great Basil questioned Eunomius, who had taken care to cover the folly of Arius with chatter full of discussions and blasphemies and where there are many mysteries, who said that the Son is the work of the Father, and not his progeny; he takes up the very expression and says: "What do you say or how do you understand this work? Which of these things? The operation which is, so to speak, an impulse and an operating movement? Consequently the Son is not the one who operated, nor the one who was operated, that is, what was accomplished as a result of the operation; but moreover the Son is even non-existent; for" the operation and the impulse that pushes to operate something are in no way existing. But if you say that he is not the operation, but what was operated, he will be found to be the third. Consequently it is necessary to understand thus: one single ἐνέργεια or operation, and many ἐνεργήματα or effects or acts or things operated, which are done by means of this operation from the Father; for the one who operated is the first, the second is the operation, and the third is what was operated or the work.

It is very good that we also hear in proper terms the word of the doctor, which is thus: "If the Son is a work, and not a progeny, he is not the one who operated, nor yet what was operated; another thing, in fact, is the operation apart from them, but it is equally non-existent; for no Operation is existent. But if he is what was operated, he is the third from the Father, and not the one who is in the middle.

Indeed, the one who operated (is) the first, then the operation, and thus what was operated." Impious therefore are those who concerning Christ teach two natures that operate; for it is necessary that each nature have its own and distinct Operation, that is, (its) operating movement. But if we confess the Christ one of two, I mean of the divinity and of the humanity, and one person (πρόσωπον), and one Hypostasis, and one incarnate nature of the Word, consequently one will be the one who operates and one will be his movement that (pushes) him to operate, although the works are different, I mean the completely terminated (facts) that (come) from the operation. For the ones are fitting for God (θεοπρεπές), and the others belong to man, which were operated by one and the same, by God who became incarnate and became man without change.

And it is not surprising, since likewise the works of the man that we are are some intellectual, others sensible and corporeal; for example, to consult, to reflect on what we must do, to discover by our reflection and to follow a thought, that is an intellectual work, like thinking how we must organize a city or a house or a ship; but to build a house or to construct a ship, that is (a work) sensible and corporeal. However it is one man (composed) of a soul and a body who operated both this and that, and there is one operating movement. That is why, when it comes also to Christ, we know the change of words. Indeed, some are fitting for God (θεοπρεπές), others belong to man, others possess at once what is fitting for God (θεοπρεπές) and what belongs to man. But it is not for that that we will say that these are of this nature here, and those of that (nature) there; for they are said of one and the same Christ indistinctly (ἀδιακρίτως).

But some, conducting themselves in an impious manner and at the same time being sick with the last ignorance, concerning the change of works and words, have set up two that operate and speak, when they have very gravely named "natures" the persons (πρόσωπα) and have hidden two Sons and Christs under this skin of a sheep. But again I return to the bush, and I admire the figure (τύπος) of the mystery. A bush, in fact, is a plant without fruits, which is filled with sharp thorns. Now it is sins that the divine Book is accustomed to call "thorns", according to what is said by the prophet David: "I turned back to misery, while the thorn was

driven into me; I made known my sin and did not hide my iniquity (ἀνομία)" (Ps. 31:4 LXX); and according to the parable of our Savior who says: "The word of teaching is choked by the thorns," which, he made known, are "the cares of this age" (cf. Matt. 13:22; Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14); and like the intellectual vine of Israel of which (it is question) in Isaiah, which was accused formerly of having brought forth thorns instead of grapes and (which) then heard the vinedresser (say): "I waited for it to be upright, and it did iniquity (ἀνομία), and not justice, but the cry" (Isa. 5:7). Behold therefore what the figure (τύπος) shows, (namely) that the Word of God, who under the aspect of fire was then united with the bush, at the end of times also united himself to the flesh which is of the same essence (οὐσία) as us, which descends from Adam, who fell under sin, by genealogy (and) which (is part) of this race (γένος), although he incarnated himself without sin, and of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mother of God, and without human seed, and outside of all concupiscence.

I am persuaded on this subject that the translators of the divine Books, who made them pass from Hebrew into the Greek language, and notably the Septuagint, moved by God, have also reported the word in the masculine and have said many times "the bush" (ὁ βάτος) and not once "the bush" (ἡ βάτος), because the Word of God masculinized — to say something new by making an innovation (καινοτοπία) concerning this expression — that is to say rendered male, by the divine incarnation, our nature which had fallen even to femininity and to unbridled relaxation, and was trampled underfoot by desires and had forgotten natural virility. And he showed it not only virile, but still that which is fitting for God, by the hypostatic union; and truly he showed it "bush" (βάτος) or "accessible" (βατός), when he took it from our thorny race (γένος), without fruits, and which was completely inaccessible to God, and he made it accessible, and (that) to such a point that he submitted himself according to the very flesh to conception and to birth, in the same manner as we, though above us, because (he is) of the Holy Spirit and of the Mother always virgin. We hear, in fact, Paul who says clearly: "Since therefore the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he also, in like manner partook of the same things" (Heb. 2:14).

These reasonings were not made with recherche by us concerning this word “the bush”; for one can find many (expressions) of this kind that the translators employed under the influence of the divine movement. And indeed, when they also made a translation concerning the legal Passover (πέσχα) that the Jews celebrated, in making memory of their flight and their deliverance from Egypt and then of the passage that they made in the Red Sea walking on foot, certain rendered the name of the feast by πέσχα, that is to say “relative to the passage”; but the Septuagint, while the divine Spirit spoke by them aloud, as I have said, did not translate the feast by πέσχα, or passion, so many years before, but rather (μᾶλλον) they prophesied, since it is by the salutary passion of the God who became incarnate that (this) word was to be verified in itself, as much as it is possible above all. And indeed this legal Passover was the figure (τύπος) of that which is ours, the true one, by which, we also, we have abandoned the error of idolatry (δεισιδαιμονία), the intellectual Egypt, and the Egyptians, those wicked demons, and Pharaoh, the Calumniator, their chief, and we have traversed the wickedness salty, liquid and which flows in desires, after we have been purified by holy baptism and have been sanctified by the blood not of a sheep whatever, but of the Son of God.

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SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH.

… That because of the example of the bush no one, led by Manichean sentiments and drawn to a reproved sense, may think that sin is a part of our nature. Indeed, in the bush the property of possessing thorns is natural; but we, it is after we have turned away our will from the inclination to good that we have been sick with sin; and the malady is not natural, and it is not a part of the essence (οὐσία), but accidents that come from outside to nature. That is why the psalmist said justly concerning sin: “I turned back to misery, while the thorn was driven into me” (Ps. 31:4 LXX). Indeed, what is driven in is from outside and does not belong properly,

just as no one thinks that the arrow is part of the body that it strikes. As for this (word): “It was driven in,” it indicates the difficulty that we have to turn away (ἀποτροπία) from the habit of sinning.

What do they say to that, those who pour upon their own head the recent drunkenness of the imagination (φαντασία) of Eutyches and who dream it in face of the truth? Is it (ἄρα) that the figure (τύπος) of the bush does not make them ashamed to confess that, when the wise physician and the Savior healed us, we who have been sick with sin, it is purely, without sin and entirely that he



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… in a divine manner incarnated the flesh which is of the same essence (οὐσία) as us? For who had need of the society of God and of (his) union, if it is not absolutely (πάντας) that (flesh) which had moved away from God and had need of healing? But if he did not take this body which is ours, it is for something else rather (μᾶλλον), and not for us, that he came to this earthly condition. How then do these miserable and (these) accursed say everywhere that they obey the divine Books, when they combat with audacity against all (the Books), and (against) the figures (τύποι) of the Law and the predictions of the prophets, and against the rules of the Gospels and of the apostles, following the example of those who do all that is outside the law (νόμος) and who glorify themselves to live according to the law?

It is very good that because of the bush we also question those who

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SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH.

… profess the lack of intelligence (ἄνοια) of Apollinarius. What then! You say on one hand that Our Lord incarnated the animated flesh, on the other hand that this is deprived of intelligence. Which of these propositions? This intelligence which is ours, did it remain without sin, and without having received in it absolutely any of the thorns? Eh what! Eve and Adam, who obeyed her, when they had been vanquished by foods, were they unseizable from the point of view of intelligence? Is it that it was the guide and the chief, it



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… which for sin made use of the senses which lent it their service? For intelligence sees, and intelligence hears, and intelligence acts by means of each sense; and, when this is silent, all (the senses) are dead in a certain manner, inactive and immobile. That is why it did not suffice for the Book inspired by God to say: “The woman saw that this tree was good to eat and that it was beautiful to see for the eyes”; but it added: “It is still wonderful to understand, or to have intelligence, by it” (Gen. 3:6 LXX). This (word): “To have intelligence,” to what else does it belong, if not to intelligence? You who are truly without intelligence, it is for you to see and to look. For you will not yet rise up against this (word) by discussing.

How, in fact, that which was reasonable in man, that which was made in the image of God, having become sick, was the Word of God going to leave it without

healing? O the lack of logic (ἀλογία)! He so occupied himself with the flesh without reason. Do you not hear him say, even after the flood which (took place) in the days of Noah: “The spirit of man rests with care on evils from his childhood” (Gen. 8:21 LXX)? What then! (The spirit) which inclined towards wickedness, would he not straighten it, to unite it to himself; and does that belong to a wise healing? How would we give to that justly

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… the very name of inhumanation, to that which excluded this principal part of man, and this (part) by which he is man properly speaking? That is why the Fathers, in teaching the faith and in attaching themselves to the holy Books, have joined together to this (word): “He became incarnate” also this (word): “The Word of God became man,” to show that Our Lord became incarnate the animated flesh and endowed with intelligence, so that none of the (parts) in which we are might remain outside of the divine inhumanation. The Word of God, who became incarnate and became man, therefore suffered and was crucified, even though in the sufferings he did not reject far from him the impassibility, just as he did not also (reject far from him) the fact that he is God. Indeed, he became accessible to suffering because he was incarnate and was united hypostatically to that which was capable of suffering; but, when the effect of the sufferings approached even to the flesh and when it extends still more from near to near to the members, because one was he who was incarnate and made man, he could not reach this impassible. And indeed that which is incapable of suffering will not suffer, though it approach as much as possible the sufferings, which, at the same time as it approaches them, will hold themselves far off somewhere.

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… Why then, O you others, do you not confess one incarnate nature of God the Word, but define in two natures this sole Christ, breaking the union, being sick with the theopaschism that you impute by ignorance and fearing and trembling that this impassible may fall under suffering, if he is not separated from this passible? Arise therefore and strengthen your feet on the rock of faith, having full confidence that God does not need your pity. But, because he became incarnate, thereby he comes voluntarily also to suffer; and even thus he remains inaccessible to suffering, by that very (that he is God by nature. For, if he did not become incarnate, let it not be said either that he suffered, and indeed truly that is impossible; and, when he is incarnate, let him not be separated from the flesh by the duality of natures that (comes) after the union, so that the suffering may not be imputed to the human nature which subsists separately. But, he himself all the more (πολλῷ), he wrestled with death as incarnate, because it was besides impossible that it should touch the members of him who voluntarily had taken this (condition) upon himself, immortal as he is by nature. From there (it follows) also that, after he only tasted this (death) according to what he made himself man, he rose again the third day, after having broken the indestructible bonds of Sheol, and in giving as evident sign of that the dead who came out of the tombs, and these last appeared to many (cf. Matt. 27:53). He also ascended into the heavens, when entirely he was according to the flesh without limit, beyond all thought and (all) miracle, he who is entirely in all and entirely above all, enclosed all and is enclosed by nothing, and escaped every imagination (φαντασία) and every movement of the intelligence that imposes limits.

The Word, in fact, became flesh, and he dwelt among us (John 1:14), the Word himself, one of the three hypostases. It is the very hypostasis of the Son, and not as in the prophets a partial operation, but all the fullness of his divinity (cf. Col. 2:9),

as Paul says, and the very source of life which gives to those who participate in it many rivers of gifts.

Therefore, when we believe in one God the Father almighty and in one Lord Jesus-Christ, let us believe in not cutting him, but in confessing in a collective manner that he descended, that he became incarnate, that he became man, that he suffered, until he comes again to judge the



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SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH.

… living and the dead; and likewise, in continuing the enumeration and in saying that we believe: “And in the Holy Spirit,” according to the authentic declaration of the Fathers and of the doctors of the true and infallible faith, so that the Trinity remains Trinity and that we do not say, like those who divide this unique Christ and confess him two natures after the ineffable union: “We believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, and in the inhumanation of Our Lord.” Those, Our Lord himself will divide them on the day of judgment, according to the word of the Gospel (Εὐαγγέλιον), because by a division they made the Trinity quaternity, and he will place their lot with that of the hypocritical deceivers (cf. Matt. 24:51).

And if anyone says that the Word God brought his flesh from the heavens, or that he is from some other matter (ὕλη), or that he changed himself into flesh, or that he thickened himself, or that he hardened himself like ice from water, or that he acquired a form like the imprint (τύπος) (that comes) from the seal, or that he passed for having appeared in the manner of phantoms and specters and like the dreams (ἐνυπνία) which (take place) in sleep, and (if) he does not confess that the Son of God, (who is) without flesh and without body and who (is) before the ages,

became incarnate the flesh which is of the same essence (οὐσία) as us of the Holy Spirit and of the holy Mother of God the Virgin Mary, by the hypostatic union, so that he was also

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… conceived and that he did not run thus as through a channel, that he be foreign to the grace of the true and divine inhumanation, that he fall from the adoption of children and that he not find his second advent in peace and in mercy, because he rendered false the first (advent). If anyone has imagined the flesh of Our Lord without soul and without intelligence and that in anything he has dismembered the perfection of the inhumanation, let him inherit the lot of those foolish and without intelligence virgins, that the door of the wedding banquet be closed in his face (cf. Matt. 25:10) and that he be deceived in (his) hope of the future life. If anyone does not confess that the Word of God, who became incarnate and became man without change, while saying him one Son, one Lord, one Christ, one person (πρόσωπον), one hypostasis, one incarnate nature of the Word, if he does not confess, I say) that this one is impassible in that he (is) God, and that he suffered in the flesh according to the divine Books, and if anyone says that the flesh was changed or was mixed with the divine essence (οὐσία), let him be anathema and let him be delivered to cruel torments and without end.

Because therefore we have made disappear and we have rejected the mud

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SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH.

… of infidelity, while you conserve in all the purity and integrity to the sound doctrine of the faith, rising on high, you who are going to rejoice in the divine grace of baptism, turn yourselves towards the west, when you know that every place belongs to this sole God creator and good, who is known in unity and in the Trinity, cries out by the prophet: “From the rising of the sun and until its setting, my name is praised” (Mal. 1:11), and says in another passage: “Outside me, there is no God” (Isa. 45:6), and when you teach by the attitude (σχῆμα) and by the words that are going to be said that you reject far from you the black garment of wickedness, the works of darkness, the slavery of sin, the Calumniator himself, and the demons, those doctors of wickedness.

But, because you have rejected far from you the tyranny (τυραννίς) of the Evil One, turn about, turn yourselves for me joyfully towards the orient, indicating still by the very attitude (σχῆμα) that the sun of justice has risen for you, who little after will become children of light. Obtain free confidence (παρρησία) with your Lord, raise your two hands on high. You have freed yourselves from captivity; cry the words of the

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… liberty. You were the creatures of him who made you, and by the works of sin you have become the instruments of the Evil One. At the instant you will become again in a perfect manner the possession of him who created you, in leaving no more then sin to reign in your mortal body, as Paul says, but in offering to God your members as weapons of justice (cf. Rom. 6:12-13). Only cry out with the

prophet: “Lord our God, possess us. Another Lord outside of you, we know not. We name your name” (cf. Isa. 26:13). Engrave in your spirit as on a column the return that you have operated. Do not forget; what is done is not thus simply an attitude (σχῆμα) but a clear figure (τύπος) that perfects the sense.

Lot heard, after having been beforehand withdrawn by God from the wrath that was decreed, before Sodom burned by fire and by sulphur: “When you are outside of this country with (your) children and (your) wife, do not let look behind you and do not stop in all the surroundings (περίχωρος)” (Gen. 19:17). And he, he did not neglect the commandment; but his wife, on the contrary, looked behind, says (the Book), and she became a column of salt (Gen. 19:26). See again Samuel, who saw the future without deceiving himself and because of that was named “he who sees” (cf. 1 Sam. 9:9, 11),

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… said to Saul: “And you will be changed into another man” (1 Sam. 10:6). And the word was a reality. Indeed, the sacred Book says again concerning that one: “And it happens that, when Saul had turned his back to go away from Samuel, God gave him another heart” (1 Sam. 10:9).

Consequently it is to another man and to another heart that the very attitude (σχῆμα) and the word invite you. They teach you to pursue with all (your) force that which leads to what (is found) ahead, that by which you will be held back by no longer running towards evil. That is why Our Lord said in the Gospels (Εὐαγγέλια): “Remember the wife of Lot” (Luke 17:32); and again: “No one, putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

You have renounced the Calumniator, his artifices, magic with its varieties, illusion, all the deceit of lying, which deceives and divides into many parts (πολυσχιδῶς), divination, incantation, the language of horoscopes which, by itself as well as by the movement of the stars, imagines the births of men, events, visions and specters and, as these good-for-nothings say, the lots, the destinies of life and what found itself in opposition with the providence of God, to omit



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… running, indeed, the extravagance of the observation of hours and times and the attention that has for object the circle of the stars called zodiac (ζῳδιακός), of which each part, a twelfth or a sixtieth, is(?) a cord that twists by the effect of vinegar, as they say, so as not to accuse of error its movement and not to take account of its lie in the case of a false indication of the hour. What must one say of the evil stars, which impute the cause of a movement of this kind to the Creator, he who is the cause and the chief of all goods? For it is from us that comes “ the evil, we who are led “ ourselves by our free will and by our volonté, and not by another thing. Indeed, if we were led by the necessity (ἀνάγκη) of the stars, useless would be the labor of perfection; in vain would laws (νόμος) repress theft, murder, adultery and other iniquities, and no one would repent of (his) wickedness, when once he would be half with evil.

Although I have many things to say on this subject, I pass them because of the lack of time — indeed, the homily must warn and instruct, but it does not belong to the refutation (ἀνατροπὴ καὶ ἔλεγχος) — while I know exactly only this, (namely) that many of those who make profession of knowing these things learnedly and exactly live in a manner

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SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH.

… miserable, and it is not possible for them, by the subtlety of logic and as according to music — for they say that again — to produce a single movement against the religion of the Christians, or rather (μᾶλλον δέ) to incriminate those themselves who are set in motion in making war on themselves, when they have advanced an opinion (δόγμα) that is their own enemy and their own adversary.

But these are fables and dreams, and veridical are the words of him who said: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Matt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33). That is why the brass cauldron (λεβήτης) of Dodona that serves for divination, the waters of Castalia that say insanities, the tripod (τρίπους) of Delphi, that perverse neighbor that we have at Daplun are silent — “Yes, they say, because they are not rendered propitious by the sacrifices and by the blood.” — O the lack of intelligence (ἄνοια)! For it is especially now that they ought to show with more profusion than formerly what is proper to them. The divinity, indeed, is without need; and it is when it

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… is combated that piety (εὐσέβεια) appears more brilliant. That is why also “ the divine Daniel and the three children of Babylon, while saying that “There is neither

holocaust, nor sacrifice, nor oblation, nor incense" (Dan. 3:38), did miracles and signs (cf. Dan. 3:24-25, 50) and prophesied. But now that all the people of the Jews has blasphemed and acted in a criminal manner towards Christ who had spoken by the prophets (cf. Heb. 1:1), and that although it has a cult and a service (of altars), as it seems to it, it goes and comes and is dispersed in every place of the earth, without having obtained a single miracle or (a single) prophecy. But the faith of the Christians, at the very moment when it began, while it was persecuted, chased from everywhere and torn by supplices of all sorts and after it had watered with blood the whole earth, has shone by prodigies, because it had God who fought for it.

But what shall I do seeing that the homily itself drags in length? And that is why I am hindered from speaking further. You then, when you say farewell (χαῖρε) to all error, according to the Legislation (νομοθεσία) of the Apostle, whatever that you do in word or in action, do all in the name of Our Lord Jesus-Christ (Col. 3:17), and do not deviate from what is fitting.

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SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH.

… With this preparation, run towards the divine baptism, towards the waters, towards the Spirit by whom you are going to be purified of all defilement, while you are delivered from every stain. It is in the soul that the waters pass; for they are mixed with the divine Spirit. They wash what is invisible, they touch what is hidden. Hear the prophet, who from afar proclaimed in advance the virtue (of the waters): "Wash yourselves, be clean, remove from your souls your wickednesses. And if your sins are as scarlet, I will whiten them as snow; and if they are as purple, I will whiten them as wool" (Isa. 1:16, 18). But that does not show that the purification is different — it is, indeed, one and the same and equal in honor (τιμή)

— but that the brilliance of baptism, which is at the same time like snow, is still a garment; for that is what wool shows; you all, indeed, says Paul, who have been baptized in Christ, you have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27), because “ wool also is thus, (namely) white, and it is known in advance that it yields not at all or at least little to snow. Indeed, when the prophet wanted to show at the same time that it is with great munificence that this divine bath whitens and clothes, he was in need and was embarrassed, not finding a unique example that could show the image in a perfect manner. For snow possesses the brilliance to a high degree, but it does not clothe at all; and wool, while bringing the thought of the garment, does not show the whiteness par excellence, that of snow. It is therefore necessarily that he made use of two (examples), when he wanted to mark the power of this unique action; for it was not to introduce a difference in the purification.

One can find that in the divine Book concerning other (facts) also. Indeed, when our Savior, the Christ, was transfigured on the mountain, Matthew says: “His garments became white as light” (Matt. 17:2); and Mark: “His garments became shining, very white as snow, such as a fuller on earth cannot whiten (thus)” (Mark 9:2). And however, how is it not certain that, when it is a question of one and the same fact, there enters no difference by reason of the examples, and that although truly there is a difference both in light and in snow, and also in garments cleaned by the fuller. Therefore, whether someone is red with sin, or whether he is the color of blood and of scarlet, he will obtain the same grace from the point of view both of brilliance and of garment.

Do not therefore pay attention to the waters only, but still to the word that sanctifies. The word, indeed, is the power of baptism, because:

… the word belongs to God; for the wise Paul says: “After having purified in the bath of waters with the word” (Eph. 5:26). Do not pay attention to me who am filled with many faults, but to Christ. It is more important, or like John I cry out: “He, he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire” (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16). He, and not another, he stands near the source; he, he opens the heavens; he, or rather (μᾶλλον δέ) as he in whom “is found the dwelling of the Spirit, he makes descend the voice of the Father, which declares you children, though it is not as he; for he was the Son by essence (οὐσία), he who was baptized for us, and not for himself; and you, you will be by grace. It is therefore the baptism of that one, by which he purified the waters, that is what operates, even by our intermediary.

Consequently, when you come up from there brilliant, turn away your faces from all that is black or that makes a stain. For as some poor and miserable, when he finds himself receiving from someone a white garment as a gift and a benefit, does not consent to soil it by using it habitually, but that he uses it only at feasts, and that with precaution and with care, so, you also, when you receive the divine and royal robe (στολή), you will not go, in clothing yourself with it, towards what constitutes ordinarily

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… actions (done) in sins — for it would be soiled — but you will conduct yourselves always as at a feast. And what is the feast? The commemoration of God; for “I remembered God, and I rejoiced” (Ps. 76:4 LXX) says David. Remember therefore that one and yourselves. For, if you look at us, in case it is not too hard to say, we will enter still at the same time as you, or rather (μᾶλλον δέ) we will go before you, on the road that leads to sin and to all negligence. That is why pray at this hour when you put on the grace of the adoption of children. You,

indeed, you can (obtain) that we also, in converting ourselves, live with you for the glory of Christ, the God who is above all (cf. Rom. 9:5). To him (be) the glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages! Amen!

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## HOMILY 110 ON THE HOLY MARTYR THALLELAIOS. IT WAS IMPROVISED, WITHOUT HAVING BEEN PREPARED IN ADVANCE, IN THE CITY OF AEGAE, IN HIS ORATORY. TABLE OF CONTENTS

It is to me, who had previously desired to see this holy place and the temple of the martyr Thallelaios and to embrace his tomb—an athlete crowned every day with numerous miracles and healings of all kinds of illnesses—that a suitable opportunity has been given by Him who is the cause of all good things and (who is) ready to fulfill the desires that lead to what is excellent, so that I may obtain the object of this praiseworthy, profitable, and desirable desire. And what is the occasion? It is the praiseworthy and pious general («στρατηγός», or the general) who has come here for the direction of the general affairs of the administration («πολιτικά»). For it was not possible for me, who is in the city of Antioch" by the bonds of the pontificate, legitimate and yet painful, and known by experience alone, to be by chance outside the city without being brought to it by a very important occasion. This is what has been arranged by Him who is skillful («εὐτρεπής») and wise, who produces all things with a view to our salvation and who provides a means («χώρα») to those who are without means («ἄποροι»). When David felt such help and made everything depend on Him from whom all good things flow and descend, he said in his prayer: "The Lord God is blessed; blessed is the Lord all the days. And the God of our salvations will make us prosper; our God is a God of salvation" (Ps. 67:20-21).

How then could I not, today, move my tongue to give thanks for the benefits I have received, I who have approached the tomb of the martyr, which performs healings? For others, it is the affliction of the limbs of the body, which causes the pains of childbirth in the depths and gives birth to illnesses, that brings them to the healings that flow very abundantly from the holy tomb, more than from any source that flows constantly; but for me, (what leads me) is the paralysis of my soul which has sinned much, and the illness which (is) more serious than all, and the desire to be delivered from it. Therefore, by showing in a few words the benevolence («εὔνοια») of (my) will, it is still in the likeness of the prophet David that "I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the Lord, in the midst of you, Jerusalem" (Ps. 115:18-19). Jerusalem, indeed, is every Church that truly praises God, because in truth the very name of

Jerusalem, passing into the Greek language, means "the vision of peace." And who is it that sees the divine peace with the eyes of the spirit and always hears it called out loudly by those who perform the sacred functions, if not the Church, to which, through the apostles, Christ, our peace (Eph. 2:14), said: “I give you my peace, I leave you my peace” (John 14:27)? I will therefore make this the praise of God who grants his help, (namely) that I have chosen to praise him who fought for him with strength and underwent martyrdom, and that I have been conquered by the praises («ἔπαινοι») of the martyr. A holy conduct and the preparation of a pure life led him to that triumph and to the complete victory against the Slanderer, I do not doubt it. For it is fitting to keep in mind that great actions are the preliminary exercises («προγυμνάσματα») of very great combats («ἀγῶνες»).

However, after having omitted those and honored them with silence, I have greatly admired this, (namely) how, before the realization of the facts, (the saint) had been called in advance by the name of Thallélaios—which in truth was to take place—when, like a tree that is good from the point of view of fruit production, he makes germinate and brings forth from his tomb a rich mercy upon the sick and proclaims by the very facts the word of the psalm: “And I, (I am) like a fruitful olive tree («ξυστοκαρποφόρον») in the house of God” (Ps. 52:10). From where, then, was this gift given to this particular martyr, to the exclusion of other martyrs? It seems to me that it is because, by a pure and true mercy, without any mixture of fear, he received the likeness of the sufferings of Christ and of his salutary death, like those who have been placed mercifully before a well-painted image on a panel and who have imitated it while preserving the resemblance. For after Christ, the Word of God, had permitted the Israelites the bloody sacrifices of bulls and goats coming from pagan coarseness, had left them what was customary, but had distanced them from false gods and had ordered them to sacrifice to him alone, and when he saw them offering these (sacrifices) thus simply and like those who hypocritically pretended («ὑπόκρισις») to accomplish the Law («νόμος»), they who resulted in all wickedness and strayed into the ferocity of wild beasts and into the cruelty and hardness towards their fellow men («συγγενεῖς»), by reproving the exercise of their worship, he said: “I want mercy, and not sacrifice” (Matt. 9:13; 12:7; Hosea 6:6).

And as for himself, when because of (his) mercy for us he emptied himself (Philipp. 2:8); not in that he rejected his fullness from himself—for how, indeed,

could it be that He who is immutable should depart from what He is, or that He who is perfect should be diminished in anything?—but in that he took the flesh which (comes) from us, animated by an intellectual soul, and he did not take it by a love of spirit as in the case of the prophets of old; however, he united by the hypostatic union the two things, I mean sacrifice and mercy, when on the one hand he became man because of his mercy for the human race («γένος»), and on the other hand he offered himself as a sacrifice and an offering for us to God and the Father, who granted us freedom from on high, for the debts that we had, and made us free men instead of slaves. Therefore, because Thallélaios, the champion («ἀγωνιστής») of piety («εὐσέβεια»), imitated principally this sacrifice mixed at the same time with mercy, when he loved with a burning love a death worthy of praise, he presents the signs of the image; and, when he was placed in the earth, or rather («παραλλὰξ δέ») when he lives the true life, he makes germinate and produces mercy for those who need it. This is why it is from a source where one can drink abundantly that we draw an incessant healing, which grows and multiplies by the very fact that it flows forth, like the miracle («θαυματὸν ἔργον») of the loaves of our God and our Savior.

But, in saying this about the name of Thallelaios and about the abundant gift of mercy, I rise to a prophetic memory that suits the present question. For once, a woman who had approached the prophet Elisha, who complained of the widowhood and poverty that overwhelmed her and of a demand for payment of (her) debts and said that all she possessed was the oil contained in a small vessel, immediately heard (him) say: “Go then, ask for yourself vessels from all your neighbors outside, empty vessels; do not ask for a small number; you will enter and shut the door upon yourself and your children; you will pour into these vessels, without moving them away; and what is filled, you will take” (2 Kings 4:1-7). And she did so. And the word of the prophet made the oil flow, and (it) did not stop until the number of vessels failed that woman. Let us therefore also dilate the vessels of faith, and renew them, purifying them from ancient wickedness, and let us not narrow them by (our) lack of faith («ὀλιγοπιστία»). And the mercy of the martyr will never fail us, nor the remission of debts which (result) from sin, through Christ Jesus Our Lord. To him (be) the glory throughout the ages! Amen!

**HOMILY 111 THIS (HOMILY) WAS ALSO DELIVERED AT AEGAE. IT INDICATES THE (SUBJECT) ON WHICH IT WAS ALSO SPOKEN, WHEN, (IN RESPONSE) TO A QUESTION, IT WAS IMPROVISED, WITHOUT HAVING BEEN WRITTEN BEFOREHAND.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

There are also ears eager (to hear), which do not limit their hearing with measure: and they are proclaimed blessed because of (this) praiseworthy passion, because they chase away a satiety of hearing which, when it relates to divine things, is dishonorable. For who is he who will also be sated with God, the intellectual and inaccessible light? Indeed, if, seeing the (light) every day, we cast upon it sensible eyes always new, what shall we say of the ineffable splendor, towards the radiance of which Moses, having seen a very small ray, hurried running, interrogated the God of the universe, when he was wounded in his heart, and said: “Show yourself to me” so that I may see you clearly. And when God yielded a little, and as much as it was accessible for that man, the sacred Book says: (Moses) saw what was behind (God). Indeed, because (God) entirely escapes us by running, one will only see Him as much as one will see His back when He flees. That is why I congratulate you, (you) also, on (your) desire to hear divine things. For thus Our Lord also said of Mary, the sister of Martha, that she had firmly applied her ear to His teaching: Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Because yesterday I put forward some propositions, addressed to some among you, concerning the incarnation of God and someone posed a question to me, saying: "If the Son is inseparable from the Father, why do we not say that the Father also was incarnate and was made man?" It must be said that the Father is inseparable from the Son, in that (the latter) is God with God, and (this) by the community of essence (ousia)—for one is the divinity of the Father and of the Son, just as, for example, one is the humanity of Paul and of Peter—and not by the property of the Hypostasis. Never, indeed, will the Son change or pass to being the Father, just as the Father does not pass and does not change to be the Son, for the Son is begotten by the Father without beginning and eternally, in the same manner that the ray (comes) from the light of the sun, without ever being separated from that which makes it shine; and the Father is not from something, but His property is "non-generation" (agennēsia). That is why, indeed, it is properly speaking that one is and

is named the Father, and the other (is and is named) the Son. Either, therefore, you will also give to the Father that He is the Son, you will say that He who is not from something and (who) is without generation is begotten, you will create confusion in the proper images (eikōn) and you will leave us the names of the hypostases empty and even (reduced to) nothing at all; or else, as long as the Father remains the Father and remains He who cries out through the prophet: “I am, and I am not changed”, there is no necessity (anankē), because the Son is incarnate, that (the Father), He too, should be considered incarnate with Him. Indeed, if we hear the preachers of the truth cry: “The Word was made flesh”, and that the word is the child of the intelligence, and that the intelligence which is above all and essential is the Father, the Word consequently is something other than the intelligence of which it is the Word, although it is an exact image of the intelligence, figuring in some way and showing, as with a perfect seal, that which (is) in depth, and the movement, and the thought which is invisible and which (is found) in the heart.

That is why, indeed, (the Son) is not said only the Word, but also the angel of the great counsel and the image of the invisible Father, which indicates not a little in itself the intelligence by which He is begotten and (which) shows the original as in an image, in such a way, indeed, that to Philip, one of the disciples, who had said: “Show us thy Father”, He also says: “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father”. This (word): "He hath seen me," is taken here instead of the (word): "He hath understood me"; for how would one see with a corporeal and sensible sight the Father who is incorporeal? That is why, indeed, He also previously put this (word): “Thou hast not known me”, so that this (word): "He hath seen," might be understood: "He hath known"; for the knowledge of divine things is an intellectual vision. That One, therefore, was incarnate and was made man, (namely) that Son, that Word, that image, (and) not the Father, not the intelligence, and not the original. That One “made himself poor for us, though he was rich”. O the conciseness (brachylogia) of the expressions, which carries in itself the richness of thoughts befitting God (theoprepēs). Properly speaking, indeed, He is rich, He who is without need and perfect in all things (holoteleis), which is the property of God; for he who lacks something, that one is not rich. Thus consequently He was of the same essence (ousia) as the Father, of (the same) glory, of (the same) kingdom, of (the same) eternity. Consequently this rich one made himself poor voluntarily, and

not when he was led by force by something; indeed, who would also lead by force He who is thus by nature and by power? He made himself poor, in that He became man without change, while He remained rich, which He was, without having cast far from Him the divine and essential greatnesses that He had. For if poverty was lacking to Him, how have we, according to the word of Paul, become rich by His poverty? How do they blush at the words and the sufferings of His poverty which belong to the economy, these superfluous defenders (syndikoi) of Him who is without need and rich and who take refuge either in the Manichean imagination (phantasia) of Eutyches or in the Jewish division of Nestorius? Indeed, if He did not speak in the manner of men, from where would they know that He made himself poor? Indeed, if He did not suffer, neither did He save. But He suffered because He was incarnate, when the suffering attached itself to that which was capable of suffering and it could not pass to that impassible one, even if it had done violence in a most particular way. Let us not, therefore, divide the Emmanuel, (who is) one indivisible reality and name; let us not remove Him from suffering either, unless we dare to strip Him first of the flesh: but, as long as He is understood to be incarnate, He is also confessed to have suffered according to the flesh and He is believed to be God and the Savior of the universe. To Him (be) the glory through the ages! Amen!

## HOMILY 112 ON THE ÉNKAINIA, OR DEDICATION, OF THE GREAT CHURCH, WHEN THE SYNODICAL LETTERS (SYNODIKAI) OF SAINT TIMOTHY, ARCHBISHOP OF THE (CITY) OF ALEXANDRIA, WERE TO BE READ. TABLE OF CONTENTS

It is from the sacred scriptures of the God-inspired Book that we have received both the name and the fact of the énkainia, or dedication. And indeed somewhere we have also heard the holy Gospels (Euaggelia) say: “And it was the dedication at Jerusalem”. That is why we too now celebrate this feast instituted for this Great Church: and when we also honor this divine temple, where every day the mystery of piety (eusébeia) is celebrated and the entire order (táxis) of spiritual worship is accomplished, and when we send up honor to God Himself, according to the word of the prophet who sings and says: “We will worship in the place where his feet have stood”; and also when we show that we do not place the entire object (of this feast) in this visible edifice, by recognizing an antiquity and a newness of wood and stone and celebrating their dedication, but when we hold our souls free from all ignorance of God and from the ancient wickedness and make them ascend anew to the newness and rejuvenation of faith in Christ and of works renewed by perfection. For, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, we hear Paul exclaim. That is why we also make mention there of Constantine, the truly pious (eusebés) emperor, and of the three hundred and eighteen holy and blessed bishops—and this although the cycle of time does not at all bring the Remembrance of their departure towards God, because it was not on a single day that they all together left this life—in order to show that the solemnity is mixed and of this church which is seen and of that which is conceived (by the intelligence), which (Church) in truth is the rock of faith on which we stand firm, we who have been built, as Paul says, on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, since Jesus Christ is its cornerstone; it is in him that the whole building, being joined together, grows to form a holy temple in the Lord; it is in him that you too are built together with him to be a dwelling of God by the Spirit.

And indeed this Constantine of religious (theosebés) and because of that above all pious (eusebés) and blessed memory, has not only rebuilt, restored, and raised up this sacred temple for us, but he also gathered the three hundred and eighteen holy fathers in the city of Nicaea, so that the cornerstone, Christ, which was placed on

the solid rock of the faith of those who truly confess Him and was covered by the earthy dogmas (dógmata) of Arius, which counted this Uncreated One together with the creatures, was by them uncovered, freed, and shown in its clarity with the doctrinal spades (skápaï) of Orthodoxy. (This is) what we verify they also did, when they withdrew and extracted from the holy Churches the earth of the impious and earth-envying dogmas (dógmata), threw it outside the camp, according to what is said in the Law (nómos), and showed the splendid cornerstone, (Christ), placed on high, elevated above every creature, equal in honor and equal in essence (ousía) to God the Father and to the Spirit; because of his love for mankind (philanthrópia) for us, he became poor without change and voluntarily, to be united with the flesh; because of the Economy, he descended as far as "he who is above all principality, authority, dominion, and power", so that he might also taste death and endure it: and it is certain that it was unto the body which was capable of suffering, which was animated by a soul both rational and intellectual; and indeed the suffering did not belong to anyone else but to God who was incarnate and became man; he is one of two, without division, of the divinity and (of) the humanity; he remained impassible, although he participated in the suffering through the intermediary of that which was capable of suffering; indeed, to him to whom the body belongs, to him near whom the suffering stands, it is to him absolutely (pantós) that (belong) the cross and the death, without him having need for his defense (suntégoría) of the atheistic imagination (phantasía) of Eutyches and of the division into two natures of Nestorius and of those who united in a tragic manner at Chalcedon, to prevent him "from saving us" and to thus give him, as it seems to them, a useless and vain impassibility, or the illusion, or the human nature, to which is imputed separately and apart this great success (katorthóma) of the salutary death and resurrection.

It is therefore rather (mâllon) of the Church which has its foundation on this intellectual rock of the faith that I celebrate the dedication today, (and) not of that which is seen with sensible eyes; and this is clearly confirmed by Him who produces all things with wisdom and directs what belongs to us. For she is celebrating with us, the holy Church which (is) in the great and faithful city of Alexandria, although she is far away by the distance of places, and united and close by the spirit; and mystically she rejoices with us and presents the offering: on one hand, for the remembrance of the three hundred and eighteen holy bishops and pontiffs, a new pontiff and an elder in spirit, and, on the other hand, for the

foundation of their faith, synodical letters (synodikaí) which say the same thing as the foundation and agree with it, like a cithara whose strings have harmonious (súmphônoi) sounds and sing what is beautiful and (what) gives pleasure. I believed that it is through the prayers and supplications of the Fathers that there has been given to (this Church) a proven pastor who received from his childhood the best formation both in reason and in what suits the priesthood (hierósyné), who did not ascend the seat with unwashed feet, as they say, but who is first pure, before the priesthood, by the study of life and reason, by a vigilant care and by a total preparation so as to be in a state to teach others also and to bring them to the mysteries. Thus the divine grace has also rejected and blown away like a straw those who in an impure and profane manner (bébélos) have desired the first dignity, or who are clothed in a feigned, inoperative modesty which makes them lower their heads like a dead sheepskin, and who in (their) dreams throw upon themselves the robe (stolé) of the pontificate; and (this) when in dreams they are not exempt from "the passion", but are still bent under its domination in a very miserable manner and when, like greedy dogs, they circle and prowl, if by chance they notice that something new is happening somewhere, either in the agitation of crowds, or in another disorder of the times, or in the confusion of events—for in calm it appears what men they are—to satisfy their ignoble desire, or when they are filled with the gifts of fortune amassed through injustices and wish thereby to buy a hand that is for sale, and not the grace of the Spirit which is not for sale.

What are you doing, O man? Why do you run, without being called or when you are called by yourself, to a sweet immolation, whose consequences are bitter and full of pains, and whose very beginnings are hard for those who, although they have little intelligence, are not completely deceived by ignoble desires? Why do you carefully buy the hanging of Judas? Why are you eager for the fall of Simon? You will not be slow to hear: "May your money perish with you!" Do not turn your face from Paul who says: "No one takes for himself (and) honor, but when he is called by God"? However, I have said it, God has had pity and he has visited the holy Church of the Alexandrians who love Christ, he who has chased away the wolves and by a just judgment has seated him who is suited to (this) throne (thrónos), who can stand at the head of his flock by the Spirit and according to justice and truth; and, it seems to me, it is good that we apply to him the prophecy of Isaiah, which says: "And the throne shall be established with mercy and on it

shall sit according to truth, in the tent of David, he who judges, seeks right and pursues justice"? It is certain for everyone that the Church is the tent of David, because of Christ, the head of the Church, who descends from the race (génos) of David by genealogy. For me, I think that this grace and the mercy which (comes) from this tree produces good fruits. And the prophet Isaiah also, when he knew the power of childbirth and the fullness of this rock, says in the form of a question, simulating the speech as about a fact known to be true: "Is the mountain of the daughter of Zion an arid rock"? And the daughter, that is the Church of God because of the adoption of the children of the Spirit, she who because of the elevation of the divine dogmas (dógmata) is a high mountain and an observatory; for that is how the name of Zion is translated. And now it is time, because in truth we have prepared you sufficiently for this hearing, I think, that we hear the very synodical (synodikoí) words, through which you will see the agreement of our only confession and faith and of the reprobation of impious dogmas (dógmata), so that there is no more room for those who claim that the prophet says in slander: "Do not speak to us according to right; but speak to us and make us know another error; and turn us away from this path and remove this stumbling block from us; remove from us the language of the Holy One of Israel." Indeed, let us show and teach this path, although they do not want it, and let us speak the language of the Holy One of Israel, and not another. To him (be) the glory in the ages! So be it!

**HOMILY 113 ON THE VERSE WHICH (IS) IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, WHICH SAYS: BLESSED ARE YOU WHO (ARE) POOR, BECAUSE THE KINGDOM OF GOD BELONGS TO YOU. BLESSED ARE YOU WHO WEEP NOW, BECAUSE YOU WILL LAUGH. AND: WOE TO YOU, RICH, BECAUSE YOU HAVE RECEIVED YOUR CONSOLATION; AND AGAIN: WOE TO YOU WHO LAUGH NOW, BECAUSE YOU WILL BE IN AFFLICTION AND YOU WILL WEEP.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

When I see some listen with a distracted air to the words of the Gospel, laugh without reason at the commandments of our Savior and believe that the commandments are impossible and that they are repugnant to nature, I suffer like those merchants who, after having sought precious pearls, according to the parable of Our Lord, having acquired and sold a great number, finally, after having tired and wearied themselves in the works of commerce, gave themselves over to rest; then, when they saw that some had neither the experience nor the science of the use of these (objects) and perhaps covered a precious pearl with vile lead and one of the (substances which are) without value and without brilliance, they became irritated and carried away; and, once in their emotion they rose up against those (men) who had neither the knowledge nor the experience of the beautiful, they cried out: "What are you doing, O you who hide the brilliance and the shine of the pearl by marrying it with a very vile matter and (who) give it back ugliness rather than you obtain in addition the beauty that (you expect) from there, whereas you should have adapted and married the stone white as snow to the gold which presents the appearance of the sun and perfected a single beautiful appearance by the mixture of a beautiful color which (results) from the two."

And so I too, while these words of the Lord which Luke wrote were being read: “Blessed are you who are poor, because the kingdom of God belongs to you”; “blessed are you who weep now, because you will laugh”; and again: “You, rich, woe to you, because you have received your consolation”; and again: “You who laugh now, woe to you, because you will be in affliction and you will weep”, I felt that on the one hand all of you, to put it briefly, did not repent in (your) heart and that you were not saddened because of (these) words as usual; on the other hand I have even heard some say: "Please, may it not happen to me to become poor or to be unhappy or to be in need, nor also to be in affliction or to weep for the death of

one of my parents! May it happen to me on the contrary to overflow with goods and possessions and to enjoy them, (to see) wealth flow to me from everywhere, to have pleasure, to be in joy, to laugh, to contemplate the entertainments which (take place) in the tent, to amuse myself and to have a life exempt from all sadness!"

To those also, like that merchant, after a commerce which lasted a long time, while I wanted to apply myself to rest, because I cannot bear the contempt of the intellectual stones, of great price and precious, I will cry out: These truly living words, O excellent ones, pure, holy and celestial, when they are received in souls of gold and enlightened, will show the brilliance which is found there: but, when they fall into hearts of lead, or rather into (hearts) of mud or of a pig, to speak in more proper terms, they are buried and hidden in the darkness of thoughtlessness, while voluntarily the soul stops up its eyes; if it had opened them a little, a flash would not pass without being seen. That is why Our Lord said: “Do not give the holy things to dogs, and do not cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them with their feet and, turning, they tear you to pieces”. For, after having trampled underfoot by thoughtlessness the brilliance of the divine words and having altered, as much as it was in their power, because they have neither seen nor understood, they try many times to turn against us the embarrassments of controversy and the opposition of objections, believing thereby to crush us and to vanquish us as in combats.

Come, if they (so) wish, by inclining their ear and purifying it a little from the earth, let them therefore listen to the elevation of the evangelical words and of (their) meanings! For, the Sacred Book does not at all define that he who is devoid of goods is poor, nor on the contrary that he who overflows with them is rich. But it proclaims blessed he who in his thought is poor with a praiseworthy poverty, he who is gentle in (his) manner, he who gives thanks to God for what has been given and does not desire what has not been given, so that, if someone possesses nothing, but desires goods, is choked by the desire of wealth, has little in fact of possession and can be bought for an obol after food and clothing — for it is in that that the law of the Apostle has enclosed what suffices — he who is such is not the poor who is proclaimed blessed, but the rich who is in affliction; for, because of covetousness and because of the desire of what is superfluous, he is in himself rich with a bad wealth. That is why what is found in Luke in a general manner: “Blessed are the

poor", Matthew reported that it is explained by a particular definition, when he wrote: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". In the same way he also who abounds in goods and is filled with their possession, (who) hears Paul who wrote to Timothy: "Charge the rich of this age not to be haughty, nor to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on the living God who gives us all things richly to enjoy, to do good, to be rich in good works, to give readily, to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the true life", and who does that in reality, that one, (I say), who possesses what he has, not rather for himself, but for those who are in need, is not the rich who is mourned, but the poor in spirit and the heir of the kingdom of heaven.

Was not Job such, who, in the imperfect condition of the times and on the unbeaten path of piety and virtue, made perfectly evangelical and perfect reflections, showed by a royal imagination and in the abundance of possessions the immateriality, that is to say, the manner of living poorly, was not attached to the wealth which followed its course, drew it with a large and rich hand and did not bury it in the earth, in order to acquire freedom and to say to the Lord who had instructed him, after the test of the strange wound of an ulcer, on the one hand in the form of a confession, and on the other for our teaching and our example: "If I have made gold my strength and if I have put my trust also in a precious stone, if I have rejoiced also when great wealth fell to me and if I have laid my hand on (goods) innumerable, let this also be counted to me as a great iniquity!" And by these (words) he showed that on the one hand he disdained and despised the matter of goods; on the other hand, what expenses he made in applying himself to become poor in spirit and to become rich with largesse, (with) magnanimity and with charity, listen to him say in what follows: "A stranger did not pass the night outside, and my door was open to all; and if I have allowed the weak to pass through my door with an empty bosom; and if I have not given to someone the bill that I had on him, after having torn it, without having taken anything from the creditor"; and a little while before he says: "And if I have also eaten my bread alone, without having made the orphan participate". In the same manner was rich also the patriarch Abraham, while on the one hand he overflowed with a possession of every kind, (and) that on the other hand he was poor in thought, despised the matter every day and was far from the desire to possess what is superfluous, to the

point that, after having made war on five kings, having vanquished them in war and in combat, they who had come to war against Sodom and against Gomorrah, and having made them prisoners, he despised the booty and said to the king of Sodom who had obtained his help and wanted to honor him with a portion and a part of the booty: “I will stretch out my hand to the Most High God, who created heaven and earth, if, from a thread to a shoelace, I take anything of what is yours, so that you may not say: I have enriched Abraham, except for what the young men have eaten and the share of the men who came with me”. These reflections and (these) words come from a thought that is truly poor in spirit. "The part that suits me," he says, "I disdain with magnanimity; let it suffice for my servants and my familiars to be fed only! As for those who went at the same time as me and (who) helped me, let what comes to them from the booty be given to them! Vain, in fact, is what (comes) from vainglory; shall I appear (to be) magnanimous and make gifts even with what belongs to others?" For it is with what is one's own that one practices the philosophical life well. That is what Paul also did, when he recommended to those who preached the Gospel and to those who remained constantly near the altar to live from the Gospel and from the altar. But, he, he abandoned in a sublime manner what came to him, and said: “But I have not used any of these (rights)”, and: “What then is my reward? That, in preaching the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, so as not to make full use of my authority in the gospel”. For, when someone renounces what is subject to his authority, he is praiseworthy for (his) magnanimity; but he who is without mercy even concerning what suits others, it is as an immaterial legislator that he is reproved concerning the philosophy for which he does not suffer.

That the patriarch Abraham was inclined to expense because of his wealth, the practice of hospitality attests, to the point of sitting even in full noon near the door of his tent and waiting to seize by chance one of the strangers who passed; it is thus in truth that it even escaped him that he had received the angels, as Paul says, or rather God himself, under the aspect of men and under the appearance of angels. That is that poverty of spirit which is proclaimed blessed. That is that wealth which is not rich and which is well subjected to its owners and (which) like a servant and a slave serves good works, so that wealth, that which in truth has the authority and (which) has become the owner of him who possesses it and is his prisoner, bound as he is by the fetters of the desire of avarice, to the point of not being able to

stretch out his hand and give to someone a single obole, that (wealth) there, (I say), makes of him who possesses it (its) possession and it has become the owner of him who passed for being its owner. It is by blaming this pitiable and very miserable servitude that our Savior said: “You cannot serve God and Mammon”. That is why therefore it is forbidden to someone not to become rich, but to serve the desire of wealth and to be led by it like a vile slave. Let us not therefore be languid in our thoughts and let us not be sad, or on the contrary let us laugh as if it is in vain that this is condemned, when we hear: “But, woe to you, rich, because you have received your consolation”; and: “A rich man will enter with difficulty into the kingdom of heaven”. For, the word does not reach all those who are in abundance, but only those who put all their thought in the goods and possessions, let themselves be caught in their thoughts and are not poor in spirit. And that is what Mark shows, when he reported very clearly the thought of our Savior and wrote in these terms: “How difficult it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God”. Consequently, it is not the fact of being the owner of goods, but it is the fact of trusting in goods, which closes the kingdom of heaven. And who is he who trusts in goods? — He who does not hear the word of Our Lord, which says: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”.

But to that you will say perhaps: "What shall I leave then to my heirs?" — Everything, as much as that great philosopher Job, the pious Abraham, Isaac, likewise (as) Jacob also, left. And indeed (nothing) will be lacking to the largesse of the grace of God to rival the largesse of your gift and to give you thousands of sources of goods, while you will be rich and that by pious expenses you are poor in spirit. For, from where (is there), tell me, the most advantage to leave as an inheritance to your children, from a treasure of heaven, or from a (treasure) buried in the earth, with which your heart also is buried? It is known in advance that it is from the (treasure) of heaven. And indeed, from there (comes) that we become rich with precaution and that we become poor with praise, so that we become rich according to the Law.

As those who belonged to the house of Abraham had their intelligence attentive in that place, they bequeathed an inheritance full of blessing to those who (descended) from them. For, listen to Isaac, when he blessed Jacob and began the blessing with heaven, that is to say the inheritance: “May God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth!” For to the (goods) of heaven are added in the same blessing also all the (goods) which hold (their) fruits from the earth, because it is to those who “seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness” that “all these things will be added”. But, for Esau, who appeared unworthy of the blessing, the order is reversed, and for him it is by the earth that the inheritance begins. For, what did his father say to him? — “Behold, your dwelling will be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above”. Do you see how here what (is) below precedes what (is) above, and that also is not completely empty of what (is) above because of the largesse of the liberality of God, which “sends rain on the just and on the unjust and makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good”. Consider again that the exactitude and the opportuneness of the words of the Divine Book are in relation to what is fitting. For, on the one hand, concerning what begins by heaven, according to the word of the blessing which was put in the first place, he said: “May God give you of the dew of heaven!” On the other hand, concerning what begins by the earth, what is put in the first place, it is not this (word): “May God give you!” but: “Behold, your dwelling will be of the fatness of the earth”, when you have only the liberality of God for the universe, and not an exemplary and superior blessing.

Blessed therefore are those who are poor in spirit, those who are gentle in (their) soul, those who are thus moderate, who do not thicken their thought by the swelling of wealth and do not attach themselves to what does not last and (to what) passes, or those who are poor because of the legislation of the Holy Spirit, according to what is said by our Savior to the disciples: “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life”. For, the word "Spirit", when it is found in the Divine Books in an indeterminate manner, without anything being added to it, generally signifies either the intellectual soul of man, or the good and holy Spirit which (is) of God. And on the one hand, it is the soul of man which is indicated by what is written in the prophet Zechariah concerning God: “He stretches out the heavens and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him”. To that also resembles what king Hezekiah said, when he was under the blow

of illness and his soul was about to leave (his body), it is written in Isaiah: “My spirit became within me” like the shuttle of a (woman) who weaves, when it is about to cut: Such is also what is said in Baruch: “Those who are dead, they who (are) in Sheol, (they) whose spirit has been taken”; and again: “The spirit which is bent and weak”. Similar is also what was said by Our Lord in the Gospels: “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak”; and what is written by Paul to the Corinthians: “For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?” On the other hand, it is that good and divine Spirit that these (words) which were said by the Apostle show again in an indeterminate manner: “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh”; and again: “When you are fervent in spirit”; and again: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace”, and the rest; and in another place: “For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God”.

Some, however, have tried to take the (word): “Blessed are the poor in spirit”, in the sense of the evil spirit, of which Paul, writing to the Ephesians, said: “The spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience”, "so that are proclaimed blessed those who are poor and free from the action of the enemy spirit and from every evil and passionate movement". But that is not true; in no passage of the Sacred Books, in fact, do we find that it is in an indeterminate and general manner that the guilty spirit and (the spirit) of the Calumniator is indicated, and that it is necessarily with an addition; for example: “And when the unclean spirit has gone out of a man” and in another place: “An unclean spirit of a demon” and again: “Mute and deaf spirit, I command you”. For, it is possible to understand with piety also according to this opinion the verse which is there before us, so that it has such a meaning: "Blessed are those who by the Holy Spirit have driven far from them the crowd of shameful passions and are poor from them — or pure, to speak with more truth." For, where (is) the dwelling of the divine Spirit, there (is) necessarily the flight of the enemies, the lack, the poverty and the privation.

Let us become therefore poor in spirit in every way, by having moderate thoughts, by diminishing the heavy burden of goods, of possessions, of passion, so as not to close to ourselves by their great number and their volume the narrow and strait gate of the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed therefore are the poor in spirit”. For, those who because of the Spirit and because of his divine laws do not despise the

possession of matter, but (who) for the desires of the flesh and for the imaginations of vainglory display the largesse and the munificence of useless expenses, we must pity them for their prodigality and not call generous the lovers of pleasures.

But, it seems to me, what is said by Luke in a general manner: “Blessed are the poor”, is not exempt and does not lack the special and particular distinction which (says) according to Matthew: “Blessed are the poor in spirit”. For, what is cited and put after one of these beatitudes, after this one: “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely”, I mean this (word): “On my account”, extends in the same manner to all these beatitudes and moreover is understood suitably of all. For example: “Blessed are the poor”. We must think that with this beatitude also it is added: “On my account”, that is to say: “Blessed are the poor”, on my account, which in truth signifies the same thing as the (word): “Blessed are the poor in spirit”. Numerous, in fact, are those who are not poor because of the Son of Man, that is to say of Christ, (namely) all those who bear the poverty which (comes) from privations and from hardship without giving thanks and without thanking, blaspheming against God. Again: “Blessed are the merciful”, on account of the Son of Man. Some, in fact, when they do this to be seen by men, are not proclaimed blessed. “Blessed are the peacemakers”, if it is on account of the Son of Man. And indeed we see some found peace with certain people on wickedness, just like the fatal concord, of which the prophet of the Psalms says: “I was envious of the wicked, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked”. “Blessed are the pure in heart”, on account of the Son of Man. For, who is he who could be pure, without looking towards (the Son of Man)? For it is only if someone turns his gaze away from the contemplation of this one that he will be outside of all purity. That is why John the theologian wrote: “We shall see him as he is; and everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure”. Ignatius clothed with God also wrote to Polycarp in these terms: "If someone can remain in purity in honor of the flesh of Our Lord, let him remain in modesty. But if he boasts, he is lost." For, it seems that it is not on account of the Son of Man that he who is such does what is regarded as purity. “Blessed are the meek”, on account of the Son of Man. For, it is those who because of the same laws forbid anger, clamor, animosity, blasphemy, and all malice — what Paul enumerated — that we must proclaim blessed, and not those who in the manner of fools and insensible are outside of nature. For, those, it is with justice that no one will esteem them worthy

either of chastisements for malice, nor also of crowns for virtue. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness”; it is certain that it is on account of the Son of Man. And indeed, those who seek Christ and hunger and thirst for him pursue the true justice and not at all what pleases men, which often makes even the name of (justice) lie. For many, after having made long discourses on justice, that is to say equity, have not been able to find what is truly equitable. It is in this sense that the Sacred Book of Proverbs promised to teach us and to make us learn to recognize true Justice. And indeed, when there is justice, is it not in every way also the (justice) which is true?

Likewise, that this (word): “Blessed are you who weep now” — or who are in affliction — “because you will laugh” — or you will be comforted — also agrees with the same addition and that in addition is understood with it also the (word): “On account of the Son of Man!” And indeed, it is not all sadness, while it is the root of our affliction and our weeping, which takes place on account of the Son of Man and has credit with God. That is why Paul also said: “Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death”. He is sad with the sadness of the world, he who deplores the privation of the desires of the flesh and who makes the loss of something of what is agreeable the cause of his groans. It is thus that the Israelites wept in the desert, when they remembered the pots of meat of Egypt, excited (their) greedy belly and asked Moses to satisfy the need of their desire, so that he said to God: “Where shall I get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say: Give us meat to eat”. It is of such a sadness, relaxed, soft and abominable, that are sad and it is of a reproved affliction that are afflicted also those who are open-mouthed because of very paltry and (very) contemptible little gifts and unjustly desire the goods of others, as it is written of Ahab, king of Israel, who desired to take the vineyard of Naboth without having had his assent: “He lay down, indeed, it is said, on his bed, hid his face and did not eat”, until, after having killed (that) man, he had obtained the object of his desire.

It is of this affliction hated by God that are afflicted also those who on the death of those they love push groans which (are) immoderate and disordered and which provoke blasphemy and not faith concerning the hope of the resurrection, they to whom Paul says: “Do not grieve as others do who have no hope”. Who therefore is

he who is afflicted with a happy affliction and (who) weeps on account of the Son of Man? — He who sheds tears on his own sins, seeks to purify himself and to make Christ familiar, has for cause of (his) affliction to be separated from God because he has sinned, and says with David: “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and I am sorry for my sin”; and: “I have worn sackcloth”; and: “As one who is afflicted and sorrowful, so I was humbled”; and: “My eyes shed streams of tears, because I do not keep your law”. For, it is by purifying himself through these (practices) that someone will raise himself to a great degree of the happy affliction, that he will groan out of love for the others also who need groans and that he will say in singing: “Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked, who forsake your law”.

It is in this manner that Jeremiah also, while his fellow citizens sinned and rejoiced, was afflicted, saying: “I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, nor did I rejoice; I sat alone, because you have filled me with indignation”. It is to this happy affliction that we must relate in addition also the affliction with which Samuel was afflicted, who saw from his childhood what was hidden and (who) was famous and celebrated among the prophets and among the judges, when he saw that Saul, whom he had anointed king, had sinned, had made himself guilty of contempt towards the commandments of God, had been rejected and was outside the good grace of God. Of that one, he too, he turned away his face, and he deplored however his sin, until God had revealed to him that this (sin) was without cure. It is fitting that we listen to the very words of the Book inspired by God: “And Samuel, it is said, did not see Saul again until the day of his death, because Samuel was grieving over Saul. And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel. And the Lord said to Samuel: "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel?” It is in the same manner that Paul also acted, writing to the Corinthians: “(I fear) that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced”.

There is yet another higher degree in those who are in a happy affliction: for example, when someone, after having purified his soul from matter, considers the Praise, that is to say the dignity, of this (soul), and how, after having fallen from

Paradise and having cast far from it the grace of immortality, it has put on tunics of skin, which signify mortality and death, and when he desires the departure in Christ, of which Paul said in his haste: “The time of my departure has come”; and: “My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better”; and: “We who are in this tent groan, being burdened”. David also suffered that, saying: “My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" When shall I come and appear before God?” The great Anthony also endured that, when he rose from the midst of the pure waves of the ascetic life to the incorporeal state, when he thought what suits the elevation of the soul, when he blushed and groaned every time he was forced to descend to the nourishment of the body. It is of those who are thus in affliction on account of the Son of Man that it is written: “Blessed are you who weep, because you will laugh”. And here (Luke) names "laughter" the joy and the consolation, while Matthew wrote not: “Because you will laugh”, but: “Because you will be comforted”. For, it is the custom of the Divine Book to call "laughter" joy. That is why Sarah also, after having given birth to Isaac, said: “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me”; and Job also said of God: “He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, and your lips with shouting”. As for the laughter that the mouths which burst out laughing and are not instructed spread, Ecclesiastes wisely reproves it, saying: “For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fools”.

Where are those who lose all day at the spectacles and at night go to Daphne and (who) like crows and cawing crows utter ridiculous words, (which are) ignoble and (which) bring shame for children, even more so for grown men? But perhaps I will hear (replied) to that: "Why do you insult us, without being yourself wounded in anything? Do we mock the assemblies which (take place) in church? Do we by our words push someone to go see amusements? Be silent then, since we ourselves keep silence?" But it is easy to say to them: You, you have a path which is slippery and short downwards, (that) of voluptuousness, which all at once carries away many at once and which needs no word. For me, in hastening towards the path of virtue, which is painful, rough and steep, I need many spiritual ropes, so that, while toiling much, I draw from it with difficulty one — and only one — towards the (regions) above. And indeed, it is not either the river which is in full spate and sweeps the plains (covered) with ears of grain as well as vines and fruit and non-fruit trees, which has good reasons to blame the farmer because he (to him) closes

the entrance before the impetuosity of (his) waters. Let us therefore hold ourselves quiet and make a truce to immodest laughter and licentiousness; and, before death comes to which we pay no heed, let us pursue the happy affliction, and let us not suffer like those who are not initiated and like those who have pagan thoughts, on hearing the holy Gospels say: “Blessed are those who are in affliction and weep, because they will be comforted and will laugh!” But let us praise Christ who raises us to such an elevation and to such a preeminence of virtue and ascetic life. To him be the glory in the ages! So be it!

## HOMILY 114 ON THE HOLY MARTYR DROSIS, AND ON THOSE WHO SUFFERED MARTYRDOM WITH HER; AND EXHORTATION FOR A COLLECTION FOR WHAT IS LACKING FOR THE WORK WHICH IS ABOVE THE HOLY ALTAR. TABLE OF CONTENTS

After having already dedicated two homilies to the sacred struggles of the valiant martyr Drosis, it is in honor of the holy Trinity that I come to this third homily. For, just as Paul, the apostle and teacher of the nations, when he showed himself strong in many battles for piety and saw the Slanderer resisting him in a very obstinate manner, and when, in the face of the weakness of his own body, he compared and weighed the great number of labors that fell upon him, said: "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted" and: "Concerning this thing, I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness"; and (likewise), afterwards, when he triumphed more by himself, he adapted his word anew and, concerning what he had just refused, concerning that very thing he showed greatness of soul and said: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me"; and: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us"; in the same way, I too, on the occasion of this body (vowed) to martyrdom which was extremely weak—for (the martyrdom) was that of a woman—on the occasion of this earthen vessel which is all ready and easy to break—for it was that of a young girl—very frequently I exalted, I celebrated, and I produced in public the female sex, the weakness, the fall, the easy defeat, in order to preach the richness of the grace from on high, which fought in this, which is made perfect in weakness and which wins many victories, in order to exalt the abundance of the divine power.

For, just as one will admire the warlike virtue of a soldier without arms who has charged and rushed into the midst of warring enemies and who, on the one hand, was struck from all sides and did not fall, and on the other hand, dislodged his adversaries himself, so too, he who sees that a young virgin, who enjoyed the sweetness of nature and youth and who should have been crushed and vanquished in the midst of cruel evils, stands up fearlessly and mocks what she should have feared, what else should he do, if not praise the energy of that courageous soul and

glorify Christ who gives bravery, who forms and trains even weak young girls to struggles that do not love the flesh and leads them to intellectual combats that demand a firm and unshakable preparation and disposition of the mind? Consequently, the praise of the martyr comes not from men, but from God, to whom she will rightly cry with the prophet of the psalms: "My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation".

Indeed, one can see those who make praises in the manner of men gathering praises from here and there among what is external, in the same way as in collections of alms, and presenting them as a gift to those who are the object of the praises. And, if they have an important locality as their homeland, they engage in much research and even from that city they make ample praise; and if they are famous and celebrated by family, they also embellish and amplify with their words the praises of those who have grown old, are already in a state of corruption and have become invisible with their fathers of old; and they inquire and they seek; and, if (they make finds) in diplomas and in rare writings, they inflate them greatly under the pretext of dignity; and, to put it simply, it is with the help of others' feathers that they forcibly make those who walk below and (who) have no wings of their own rise into the air. But the law of divine praises comes by the opposite (ways); and, following the example of a skillful farmer from among those who are praised, it cuts off these sterile and fruitless branches which are the food of fire, and it is by means of those which are more proper and which bear fruit that it makes the praise.

According to this divine law, consider me that Drosis, the servant of Christ, carefully and assuredly stops her steps on the rock of faith, that she stands tall and has great thoughts and that she expresses by (her) words what she showed by the facts themselves. She seems to say: "I am from the imperial city of Rome, and that is my homeland. But the branch is sterile and of no help from the point of view of virtue; let it therefore not be taken into account and let it be cut with the sickle of the farmer of the Spirit, who said of Abraham and the men who had conducted themselves well and lived in virtue that they were strangers and sojourners in the land" and who, by saying this, made it evident that they desired a better place, that is, the city of the heavens, and awaited the city of which God is the artisan and author!

"I am the daughter of the emperor Trajan. And this (branch) too is likewise sterile. Let it therefore be reached by a very penetrating section from Christ, who cries: 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me! The inheritance of the scepter and the purple of my fathers absolutely concerns me. And let the vanity of this hope also be mowed and cut, the (word): 'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? In this, therefore," she says, "have I rejected far from me the sterility, that is, the lack of fruit, and do I no longer absolutely need any section, (namely) the rejection of branches that are useless? Behold, indeed, I see that a branch of beauty crowns my head with the flowers of youth as well as leaves. Can it not give birth to a cluster? But I will also take into account this sacred word: 'As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth'; and: 'The sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth'. The gold jewels, the garments and all the luxury of women, as well as the depravity found therein, will not count as a branch, will not need section and will not sprout from this spiritual vine. For Paul, that wise farmer, removes such shoots, when as a master he prescribes to women 'that they adorn themselves not with gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works'. It is a branch," she says, "that my whole body also seems (to be). And that one, I must cut it for Christ by the sacred section of martyrdom, show (my) soul all naked and free from the bonds of passions and the inclination for the flesh and hear from the (mouth) of him who planted the most desirable word, which says by the prophet Jeremiah: 'I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?' and which renounces the nobility of him who planted it, namely the rational and divine image and likeness?"

After, with this divine and incorporeal preparation, the most virile Drosis had left the palace and taken a very courageous flight—which possesses the crown of virility, but not the accusation of timidity—she joined some women, modest and chaste virgins, who through continence and asceticism had consecrated their whole life to Christ, were occupied with the burial of those who were then suffering martyrdom and were thrown out unburied, and had made that their life; and

immediately she participates with them in everything together: in faith, in works, in hopes, in courageous exploits, and in the blessed deliverance from here below which bears the crowns for martyrdom. For one night, as they were taking and burying the patient bodies of those who were suffering martyrdom and were without burial, a troop of armed men stood before them, and they took this ready and easy prey, where was also secretly hidden Drosis, that emperor's daughter, that valiant fugitive. And this had the immediate effect that Trajan, as father and tyrant and who for these two reasons could not contain (his) anger, decreed against the virgins death, and a dreadful and abominable death taught by fury itself, once it had suddenly reached the emperor. For, as at that time he was entirely constructing a bath which is called by his name, and was melting bronze for the manufacture of cauldrons, by means of which, when they were lit, the hot water circulated and entered inside the bath, he ordered these young girls to be thrown onto that bronze, while it was blazing, burning, and molten. And what had been ordered came to execution; and it is in this manner that those souls who through great patience had meditated the destruction of (their) body ran up to heaven. It is such virgins and young girls at once that the school of Christ causes to pass to the dwellings on high (and) causes to dwell there. And from where?—From the tent and the dissolution of this world, which, because of the humidity of desires and because of agitation, the prophet Isaiah calls "sea" in a somewhat symbolic manner; and he advances clearly that he professes that this prodigy does not belong to his own power, but to the power of God. For what does he say? "The power of the sea said, I have not travailed, nor brought forth children; neither have I nourished up young men, nor brought up virgins". Consequently, let what is not mine not be imputed to me, but (let it be imputed) to the power of Christ! To this power also belonged the sign that accompanied the martyrdoms. For, as these cauldrons had been fabricated with this bronze, which, after having dissolved the limbs of these virgins, partook of a certain grace and a certain effect and the bath was prepared for pleasure and for well-being, whoever entered it ignored himself that he was taking the last bath and the funeral (bath); for without cause he fell dead by himself. And, after the emperor himself applied his mind to the prodigy, he ordered that other cauldrons be fabricated anew in place of those and that those which had tortured the virgins, by boiling death rather than hot water for those who bathed, be melted anew to become the statues of the young girls; for error itself, after having recognized the truth, still loves to honor truth by its own marks. For those who sang at all times:

"The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them" he believed he could appease with works made by human hands. The Divine Book also related concerning the Philistines that they once did something similar. For, after having taken the ark of God following a military victory, having led it away as if into captivity and having quietly retained it among themselves, they were struck with tumors on their rear ends, and their country produced a great number of mice like ants. And, when they had found the cause of the punishment, they melted figures of the plague and sent them with the ark to the God of Israel. For the Sacred Book expresses itself thus: "And they set the ark of God upon a cart; and they laid by it the golden mice and the images of their emerods".

Why then should we, the faithful, who are ranked among the children of God and who expect to inherit the kingdom of heaven, not imitate the Philistines, not turn our attention to the sacred and venerable table, and not bring what is lacking for the silver? And let it be so while we have but little, and all the more so when we have gold and silver at our disposal! But you will say: "The Philistines, it was after they had despised the ark of God and had been struck because of the iniquities they had committed that they gave the ransom for the plague." And you, do you not commit more serious iniquities? Are you not a rational ark of God? Do you not hear Paul himself who says: "Know ye not that ye are the temples of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Do you have the boldness to say that your ark is free from the passions of the Philistines as well as from the demons who severely watch over them, observe them and set them in motion? Is there among us anyone who is not a captive? For who will glory in having a pure heart, or who will have the assurance "that he is pure from his sins", as says the word inspired by God? Or, because we are not struck due to the great mercy of God, because of that shall we not think that we have sinned? Let us consider how many thousands of Persians stood, or nearly so, at our frontiers. Who then made them amazingly turn back and contained their attack (directed) against us? Was it not the hand of God which cannot be fought? What then! Would not each one give all that he possessed, when necessity came, so as not to have to endure the (rigors) of necessity? Let us represent this anguish before our eyes, and let us be generous donors concerning the gifts that profit the soul. Let us not be disposed in our spirit as if we possessed what we possess, and thus let us drive far from us the passion of avarice which

gravely obscures the soul and blinds the eyes of the wise, as the Divine Book says. And I fear that, while I say this, someone among those who are stingy and avaricious might say in his spirit or by murmuring softly under his lips: "Oh! With what impudence you solicit us! So it is for this that every year you mount the sacred pulpit and take pretext from the praises of the martyrs and bring back your word to solicit us, even when we do not wish it."

But I say, O excellent one, that it is not I who have newly found or decided this impudence. For, if that were the case, I would be ashamed, know it well, and I would blush, even when I heard another say it, all the more so when I myself would be the minister of such a word. But it is when it descends in a direct line from a sacred sanctuary that I have received it. Listen, indeed, to what the God of the universe said to Moses, while he was instructed in secret from the midst of the cloud, on the summit of Mount Sinai, for forty days and forty nights, without food: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair", and the rest. If therefore he who legislated at such a height descended even to goats' hair, how do you accuse me under the reproach of impudence, I who drag myself on the earth, breathe the same air as you and cling to the image and model of God? But would I seem to you to go against the image, because I spoke only of silver? Yet I would even accept bronze obols collected one by one or two by two from those who are by far the poorest, because they would act under (the influence) of a thought richer than those who possess.

Do you want me to show you that David also came to the same impudence and that, after his own royal and pious gift which was gathered from the various spoils he possessed, once he had prevailed over (his) warring enemies and had vanquished them, he said to those who obeyed him, at the moment when he was thinking of building a temple to God and was preparing his son for it and reserving the work for him? "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?" And they gave, it is said, for the works of the house of the Lord five thousand talents of gold, ten thousand weights called drachms, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of brass, and one hundred thousand talents of

iron; and those who found (precious) stones gave them into the treasury of the house of the LORD. And the people rejoiced at the willing mind, because with a perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD." Do you understand, O you who are avaricious and love money, how (the Book) said "to consecrate his service", and (that) although (the Israelites) had to give? But by that it shows that the act of emptying one's hand for God is, properly speaking, to fill it. And then it calls "will" the very gift of those who obey him and who (are) under his hand, which (comes) after the word and exhortation of the king, and (it calls it) not only "will", but also "joy" and likewise "perfect heart". How then do you call a "necessity" my word, which does not take away your will? For, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear", also cries now our Savior. But it is certain that you suffer even the admonition with difficulty and fear that the word will make you extend your hand which has become paralyzed by avarice. However, that is the fact not of the weakness of my words, but of the power of Jesus who healed such (hands). And, on the one hand, David and Moses, or rather he who spoke in them, said that concerning the construction of the temple and the tabernacle. On the other hand, Paul also speaks of his own need with frankness, writing to the Philippians as well as to those who (were) perfect: "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." As for the Corinthians who were imperfect and who wanted to give, he prevented them, saying: "I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you in any thing and will keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia."

Do you see that we have shown that it is by such laws that this praiseworthy impudence is protected? Consequently, on the one hand, if this prevails among you also with the laws, it is thus that I have spoken to the Philippians who were perfect. On the other hand, when you remain in the same situation, it is thus that towards the Corinthians I shall henceforth apply myself to (keeping) silence on this (matter). However, thanks (be rendered) to the virgins and martyrs, who by their own triumphs have given a pretext for also teaching in words that which relates to actions! The courageous Drosis also endured a death which resembles theirs, although it differs a little. For, after she had been condemned to be thrown into a

burning furnace, she rushed into it joyfully and willingly, and the fire received her like water, like the wind of dew which whistled in the midst of the furnace of the three children, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael. By the effect of this flame which was cold, the body of the martyr was kept in (its) integrity and without damage; and she received the first fruits of the resurrection, she who, even when she will obtain it, will necessarily say the words said beforehand by Isaiah: "Now I know truly that has been realized in the facts themselves the (word): 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead' ; for the dew which (comes) from you is a healing for them; now I have become Drosis, that is to say, 'of dew', I who confirm (my) name by the rewards of victory and glorify Christ, the true Savior and God." To him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 115 ON THE NATIVITY OR THE EPIPHANY, THAT IS TO SAY, THE APPEARANCE OF GOD. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Oh! how great is the height of the goodness of God for us! It is through it, in fact, that I also know the greatness of our sin; for it was something so great that it drew to it from on high He who is above all primacy. For, while we ourselves did not know where we lay down below, the physician alone, when he descended, revealed it and made it known. For he rose up not because of those who were sick, but because of those who were dead; that is why it is not so much in the manner of a physician that he healed; but, after we had been struck by death, he resurrected us and withdrew us (and) brought us out of its bonds. And David sings of this in a prophetic manner, saying of God and the Father: "He sent his Word and healed them, and he delivered them from their destructions" (Ps 107:20). "Why, I say," he says, "did he say: He healed? — It was after they had been caught in the nets of perdition and were descending into the pit of death that he delivered them."

The sacred trumpet of the Gospels also proclaims what agrees with this, confirming and further crying out the prophetic terms. What does it say, in fact? — "A light from on high has visited us, to enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Lk 1:78-79). It is not when from a summit, as also formerly on Sinai, there was a voice that legislated and a vision of fire that stood there and made known in part and signified the appearance of the glory of God, and that (apparition) hidden with a cloud; but it is when from a height much higher than all and of which one can conceive absolutely no limit (there is) a light spread abroad and much brighter, which belongs to the sun of justice. He himself came of his own will to those who were sitting in intellectual darkness and in the shadow of death: and he remained on high with all his rays, and he was entirely on earth and nearby, and he shone entirely in the abysses of Sheol, without having in any way abandoned his fullness and without having further suffered division or limitation as a result of his coming to us.

As for the how, neither our weak intelligence will be able to understand it, nor (our) word explain it. For, (it) passes above the comprehension of all created nature, because it is clearly written that the great mystery of piety also appeared to the angels — for "it appeared to angels," says Paul — and it is passed over in

silence that it was grasped (by them); and it is said that it was glorified by them, for they sang: "Glory to God in the highest" (Lk 2:14), and it is not written historically that (it) was explained by one of the armies that are in service (of God) and are incorporeal.

Gabriel, in fact, said this: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28), greeting the Virgin Mother of God, when with the formula of greeting coincided in an ineffable manner, without preceding, the dwelling in Mary of God the Word, as well as the unchanging and inexplicable incarnation. He did not add this (namely) how the Lord was with her; for he had not received the order to say that and he could not grasp what cannot be grasped. As (the Virgin) was perplexed and said: "How will this happen to me, since I know no man?" (Lk 1:34), dissipating only the perplexity, he then added: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Lk 1:35). "Let the fact that you know no man," he says, "not trouble you and let it not lead your intelligence to the conception which (results) from a bodily union; for the Spirit will come upon you, and the name of Spirit is outside of any indication of a body. And the Spirit is not just any, but the (Spirit) holy; it is not one of the (spirits) who are declared holy and who enter into the orders of service (of God); but it is the (Spirit) holy himself, who proceeds from the Father, who gives holiness to every created power. Where mention is made of holiness, there (there is) necessarily purity, without any trace of voluptuousness and sin. Consequently, it is as the Spirit who is of God that he will truly make the little child who is to be conceived from you and from your essence, or rather who is already conceived; for faster than my words is the effect of what is announced." Who is the one who is conceived? — The Son, the Word, the power of the Father Most High; for "the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Lk 1:35). That "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24), we hear Paul writing it. Again this (word): "He will overshadow you" (Lk 1:35), is said very opportunely (in response) to the doubt of the Virgin, who said: "Because I know no man" (Lk 1:34). This also removes from a consideration of the body, and raises towards a very divine thought, because, concerning the true and non-imaginary incarnation, there was also a need for very clear and (very) distinct words, to show a prodigy, which on the one hand cannot be told, (and) which on the other hand must be told as much as is possible.

And this, John, the son of thunder, with a strong voice has drawn for us from a divine operation as well as from secret places of the sanctuary, saying: "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14). It is not some partial operation nor (some) power of the Word that overshadowed the Virgin; and from there it is not a child like Jeremiah or someone of those who are said to have been sanctified from their mother's womb that she conceived. But it is the Word himself, who is God and is with God and is in the beginning, who became flesh, not when he changed what he was, but when in addition he took it upon himself to become flesh, because without change he united himself hypostatically to the flesh that can be born, so that the same is without genealogy on the one hand, in that he is God, and that he has a genealogy on the other hand, in that without change he became man for us, when he "took the seed of Abraham" (Heb 2:16), because it is from there that the Virgin Mother of God descended (her) race, from which (Virgin) he himself became incarnate and made man, when he united himself to the flesh that possesses a rational soul. For this is the (word): "He dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14); for there is none of these (elements) in which we are that the Word did not unite himself to, but it is entirely that he came at once into our whole formation. Understand therefore with piety both that he became flesh and that he dwelt in us, and profit from both (words) and never separate one from the other. For if you divide the words of this one Spirit, you have divided the truth with them. The (word): "He dwelt among us," or: "He dwelt in us," shows the (word): "He became flesh" (Jn 1:14), exempt from change, since the extraordinary character of the dwelling is added to it; (and) the (word): "He became flesh," shows the (word): "He dwelt," or: "He dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14), simple and full of mercy, because it is placed first before it. Chase away the detractor from everywhere, by showing through the sacred words intact and complete that the entire Emmanuel is neither diminished by confusion, nor divided by section, because this body of our soul is also called a tent, according to what is said by Paul to the Corinthians: "If this earthly house of our tent is destroyed" (2 Cor 5:1); and again: "For we who are in this tent groan" (2 Cor 5:2). And it is not at all because of this that, forgetting the cohesion or the natural union, as (happens) with artificially built houses, we will consider the dwelling or the abode of the intellectual soul in the body as simple. It is in the same manner therefore, or even above that — for particularly ineffable is the word which relates to this (subject) — that the wisdom of God the Father and (his) power, the Son who is before the ages, united himself hypostatically to an

intellectually animated body and dwelt in us, while he is other than the one in whom he dwelt, without having changed or transformed himself into him, and it is thus that he is understood to have become flesh, that is to say man, besides having remained what he was, so that a thought of change or of confusion or of division enters in no way with him, when from the two (elements), I mean from the divinity and the humanity, was realized above all intelligence and (all) word a single hypostasis and a single person and a single incarnate nature of God the Word; and it is in this manner that he accepted that the conception and the birth be imputed to him and he also showed his mother to be the one who gives birth to God. For "the Word became flesh, and dwelt in us" (Jn 1:14). For this is what is admirable, (namely) that he did not come only to the soul which because of (its) intelligence and (its) reason appears as if it were close to him, but that he descended even to becoming flesh, without having absolutely despised anything of all that belongs to us. And yet the evangelist John also expresses himself in these terms: "We have seen his glory, glory as of the only (Son) from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). Do you see clearly this, (namely) what I was saying, that the sun of justice appeared to us with all his rays? And, although he had entered as if he had slipped under the cloud of our flesh, without having been hidden (by it), however he showed clearly by the splendors of his glory that are fitting to God that he is naturally the only (Son) who is from the Father and that it is not as a result of a participation that he has the fullness in terms of truth and grace and that as God he gives us a share in it abundantly and charitably.

This light therefore which (comes) from on high, by which we have been visited, formerly, on the one hand, the prophets cried it out on the earth, looking towards heaven, asking that it appear and saying: "Show us, Lord, your mercy, and grant us your salvation" (Ps 85:7); and: "(You) who sit upon the Cherubim, manifest yourself" (Ps 80:1), that is to say appear among us, in our midst, by making yourself man, by shining and resplending as the true God. Now, on the other hand, it is from on high that heaven announces it, when by means of an extraordinary star it marvelously attracts the Magi, who come from Persia to Jerusalem and say: "Where is the king of the Jews who has been born? For we saw his star in the east, and we have come to worship him" (Mt 2:2).

Let no one, upon hearing these (words), imagine wrongly and through ignorance that it is by the divine Book that the error of the horoscope enters, by which these worthless people distribute and attribute the births of those who are born at all times. For, here is the exposition of this (theory): "It is according to a certain movement, any one, of any stars whatsoever, which from the beginning are in the sky, and according to (their) liaison and (their) conjunction relative to the stars situated in the circle called zodiac, and according to any figures whatsoever that they (form) relative to one another that the hour is written, and they predict the life that the one born at (that hour) must have." Here a single extraordinary and true star, which appeared to show the admirable birth according to the flesh of the Word of the heavens, is a sign that advances against the stupidity and drunkenness of these (theorists), which is at the service of the economy and which does not subject the birth of the Emmanuel, which is fitting to God, to the slavery of these worthless people, which distributes destinies. Often, in fact, as is also written in the histories of ancient times, changes in events are indicated in advance by extraordinary and unusual stars that appear, like those that appear in the ether and are called “comets”, “monocoms” and “doxids”, that is to say (stars) branched or hairy, bearded and in the shape of a beam. Thus the pagans will not pass on our words the judgment that they do not deserve trust and that they have nothing plausible, but they will be elevated because of these particularities and by the fact of what seems similar due to the resemblance they will not doubt, while not believing in the star that appeared to the magi. That one, I do not know if we must still call it a star, and not rather a spiritual power that appeared under the aspect of a star, because of the marvelous character which (is seen) in every thing. First, in fact, in a way it directs the magi and is their guide, shining in the direction of the earth, inclining downwards, stopping above the head of the child, showing as if with a finger and indicating the location of a very small place, which in truth is foreign to the stars and even to the moon; for they shine on the whole world and they seem to be near to each (of us) and to stand above (our) head. Because (the Gospels) have said: "And behold, the star that they had seen in the east went before them, until, having come, it stopped over the place where the child was" (Mt 2:9), it is clearly known that it rendered the (same) service to them also when they came from Persia to Jerusalem, advancing with them and going before them during the journey. And this too is extraordinary and contrary to the movement of the other stars, which generally are accustomed to move from the east towards the west; now that one

moved towards the south from the regions that are more to the north or northeast; and indeed Persia has that position relative to Jerusalem. (Then) this star appears to be extraordinary also in this that it appeared and hid itself for the need of the magi. For, once they had come to Jerusalem, it disappeared and set; and, while they were going to Bethlehem, it reappeared and it fulfilled its office of direction on the journey. It seems to me that it appeared even in the middle of full day then; for immediately Herod ordered them to go to Bethlehem, after the reading of the prophecy of Micah; and, as soon as the magi set themselves in motion, immediately the star also appeared, not permitting the brightness of the sun, by which even the light of the moon is hidden. And these (particularities), on the one hand, were truly astonishing and contrary to the aspect and movement of the stars; on the other hand, this seems to be more astonishing, (namely) that the magi say: "Where is the king of the Jews who has been born?" (Mt 2:2). For that, the very aspect of the star did not signify it at all. In fact, (the star) indicated that it led to see something extraordinary and that it marked a change in events. But what that (event) was or of what kind (it was), it belonged to experience alone, and not to the external aspect of the star that appeared, to show it and make it known. The magi themselves seem not to be ignorant of the prophecy of Balaam, which is found in the book of Numbers, to the point of attributing to it the appearance of the star and of saying similar words.

For, after the people of the Israelites had come out of Egypt, had marched in the desert for the space of forty years, had found themselves once almost near the promised land and had beaten, cut to pieces and reduced under (its) military power Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, Balak, a king of the people of the Moabites, seeing that this battle lance, or rather the right hand of God, was on its way against him and frightened by the (previous) example, sent for a famous soothsayer, as it seemed to those who then (were part of) Mesopotamia, whose name was Balaam, saying: "Come here, curse Israel for me; for I know that those you bless are blessed and those you curse are cursed" (Num 22:6). And, while God could render vain and false the curse of the soothsayer by the contrary outcome of events, he does not do that. But, as he wanted to show the greatness of (his) own power not only by a victory (won) in war, but also by many different ways, he pushes him on the one hand to come to curse, and on the other hand by a divine action not to curse, but rather to bless Israel, so that the mouth which is in the

service of lying may be believed by those who are accustomed to it and who grow up with error. It is written, in fact, that "the Spirit of God was upon him" (Num 24:2). But, because the blessing was reserved for the posterity of Abraham — for God did not say: "To your posterities," as if it were a question of several, but as if it were a question of one: "And all nations shall be blessed in your posterity," which is Christ (Gal 3:16), so that through the intermediary of Christ the blessing (promised) to Abraham might extend from the fact of faith to the Israelites who (are part) of the nations, as Paul says, writing to the Galates; for it was said to Abraham that his posterity will be "like the stars in the sky" (Gen 22:17), and it is certain that those who (come out) of baptism are pure and that, according to the word of the Apostle, in them "there is neither spot nor wrinkle nor anything of the sort" (Eph 5:27), they who will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father; Christ has been the first fruits of those, since he is the sun of justice, in that he is God, and (he has been) a star among men, because he appeared first at the Jordan, that is to say inaccessible to all defilement of sin, and he sanctifies our bath, from which we shine like stars — Balaam, this minister of demons, prophesies this blessing, figuring in advance those who, (being part) of the nations, will distance themselves from the principal idolatry, pass to piety and prophesy. And he says, looking at the future and Christ himself, although he addressed his words to ancient Israel: "I will show him, but not now; I will call him blessed, but not immediately; a star shall rise out of Jacob, and a man shall stand up out of Israel, and he shall break the head of Moab, and he shall take captive all the children of Seth, and Edom shall be (his) inheritance" (Num 24:17-18). For from all the nations — because, by having broken the ancestral cults they have chased away and rejected, by the very fact that they have believed in the resurrection by a firm judgment of (their) thought, and they have been counted for his inheritance. That is why David cried out to him, saying: "Arise, O God, judge the earth, for you shall inherit among all the nations" (Ps 82:8). This prophecy of Balaam which says: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a man shall stand up out of Israel" (Num 24:17), came by chance to the magi, who were neighbors of Mesopotamia, either through the Books, or through their ancestors, as a result of a tradition that is not written and as a result of a transmission; and they awaited the appearance of an extraordinary and unusual star and the birth of a man (issued) from the country of the Jews, who must have authority over many nations. This (apparition), these (men) have also seen it; for the magi and all the Chaldeans are accustomed to

remain open-mouthed in the presence of the stars that are in the heavens; and they immediately examined the words of Balaam; (and) for (this) affair immediately they rushed to Palestine, and in confessing the newborn child as God and king, they offered him gifts: gold, as to a king; frankincense, as to God; myrrh, as to a man who had to die for us, so that by the resurrection he would destroy death.

Let us also, leaving the darkness of error, run to the light of the knowledge of God. Let us offer him not corruptible gifts, but spiritual ones: the gold of a pure and blameless life; the frankincense of constant prayer, which is the spiritual fragrance; the myrrh of mortification of the members which are upon the earth and of the humbling of the body by abstinence. And if we have these (gifts) or others similar, let us offer them to Christ who appears, so that we may be participants of the great light of his Epiphany and so that we may be able to say with the Apostle: "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" (Eph 5:8). And again: "But all of us, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor 3:18). And: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away" (2 Cor 5:17), cried Paul. If you solemnize the appearance of God, appear worthy of God and celebrate the feast by what you appear, and you will obtain the glory which is in the kingdom of heaven. May we all obtain that it be so by the grace and by the charity of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, with whom glory befits the Father with the Holy Spirit in all things, now and always and unto the ages of ages! Amen!

## HOMILY 116 ON SAINT BASIL AND GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN.

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For my part, I think, and very justly, that this present day brings me each year not the commemoration of Basil and Gregory, but, properly speaking, the commemoration of the pontificate, and I think that this day is the day of atonement, like the one spoken of in the Law, according to which once a year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, the high priest entered into the holy of holies, that is to say, into the perfect, blessed, and pure sanctuary. Indeed, on the one hand, the number "seven" is the indication of holiness, blessing, and purity. And the God-inspired Book attests to this, it which says: "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because he rested on it from all his works" (Genesis 2:3), and (reports) that Noah, after having built the ark so that it might float and sail with the extraordinary and astonishing rain, had received the order to bring near to him, among the pure animals and the birds, seven pairs, namely males and their females (cf. Genesis 7:2-3). On the other hand, the number "ten" shows perfection, as is clearly made known by the offering of the tithe, and Jacob, who first made a vow and said to God: "And I will give you a tenth also of all that you give me" (Genesis 28:22), or rather Abraham, who, before him, gave to Melchizedek a tenth of all the spoils (cf. Genesis 14:20), and the Law contained in ten commandments in all, and also the seed of the word of the Gospel, which, when it has a measure of ten decades, yields a perfect fruit (cf. Matthew 13:8, 23), just as Isaac also, by sowing barley, brought it likewise to a hundred seeds (cf. Genesis 26:12), and also the psalmist, who was ordered to sing on a ten-stringed harp (cf. Psalm 91:4; 143:9).

What, then, was done on this day of atonement? — Let us listen. "And the priest whom they shall choose and ordain shall make atonement; and he shall make atonement for the holy of holies, for the tent of the testimony and for the altar; and he shall make atonement for the priests; and it is for the whole assembly that he shall make atonement; (this) shall be done once in the year" (Leviticus 16:32-33, 34). It has, therefore, the meaning of that day, this present day also, where we also celebrate the commemoration of these holy Fathers. In saying that they still bless the beginning of the year today, one would not stray from propriety, since first fruits of blessing, (namely) the proclamation of an illustrious consul, son of the “strategos”, or army chief, praiseworthy and pious from the land of the Orient,

have been brought to us by these true pontiffs, those who were consecrated, these Christs of the Lord, those who can cry out with Paul: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1), and (who) thus appear as Christs, those who even now offer intellectual sacrifices, exercise the priesthood and send up very pure supplications for the holy of holies, for the altar, for ourselves priests who stand before them without being worthy, so that we may not be rejected either for conduct or for word; for this is what the sacrifice and the prayer for the altar and also (the sacrifice and prayer) for the holy of holies aim at, so that, as far as is in our power, they remain holy, without being profaned by our actions and by the corruption of false dogmas. This is, indeed, what through the prophets the God who (reigns) over the universe also reproached, and even very bitterly, to some who profaned his name and also his sanctuary and who gave the nations an occasion for blasphemy (cf. Ezekiel 22:26; 36:22). It is therefore for us who exercise the priesthood at all times and particularly on this present day, it is for the whole Church also that I believed that reasonable sacrifices and prayers are offered by these magnificent and perfect pontiffs Basil and Gregory, who will both be regarded as one true pontiff, because they possessed one soul, in that they had the same thoughts and they ran towards one single high summit of perfection. And indeed, by the facts themselves they showed in themselves the pontifical costume, which formerly was described by the Law according to the figure, and finally was fully realized by the Gospel according to the truth.

And they clothed themselves in the priestly robe by (their) actions, after they had first washed themselves with the waters of philosophy and monastic life, Basil, when he also flew away to the eremitic and pure life from the dwelling and habitation of men who live in matter, and Gregory, when, to care for his sick father, he pursued, even within the city, true patience and renunciation of an indifferent and mixed way of life, to the point of sometimes making complete silence a law for his tongue. Then, after having girded their loins with continence and abstinence from desires, after having tightened their loins with virginity, after having forcefully overcome the fury and heat of shameful passions, after having treated with violence the old man of wickedness and resisted him, after having come of themselves to the new (man) and who (is) according to nature, after having passed together with this firmness through all the discipline of rational teachings and after having laboriously occupied themselves with them, they went to the crater of

divine Wisdom, they tasted its victims and they partook of its drink. And, once they had sensibly coveted and desired the sweetness of the divine words, they did not distance themselves from them, but they took pleasure in them and filled themselves with them with all their power, without being sated by them. After having said farewell to the false inventions of profane doctrines and after having used their weakness to confirm only the truth, and thus even before being anointed with the unction of the pontificate, they had clothed themselves in the pontifical tunic, which is varied because of the diverse colors of the virtues, which the model of the Law indicates, when it named scarlet, linen and similar (materials); and they had clothed themselves in the “podērēs” tunic, or that which descends to the feet, (which) is entire and (which) from one extremity reaches the other extremity, so that there is nothing that is naked or that is not covered by virtue.

Likewise, they girded themselves with the priestly girdle, which on the one hand goes around the tunic and with an elegance that (comes) from it, (and) on the other hand does not henceforth tightly constrict with force and (with) struggle the causes that procreate. They remembered, indeed, him who spoke to Ezekiel and said of the priests: "And they shall not gird their loins with violence," or as another of the translators says: "And they shall not gird their loins with sweat" (Ezekiel 44:18). For it is necessary that priests begin by treating with violence the irresistible assaults of desires and that they begin by sweating in labors; and they will have a girdle that no longer treats with violence, but that guarantees, that guards and that recalls chastity. Then, they also adjusted for themselves an “exōmis”, which is an undergarment, or a girdle. For it, too, is a priestly garment; and it indicates by its designation that it is woven from the bottom by the ascent of the virtues and that it gives, as much as is possible, the knowledge of hidden and ineffable mysteries. Indeed, only the tunic of Christ was woven from the top (cf. John 19:23), because he, he was the Most High Word, who from on high sends down and pours out upon us treasures of wisdom and knowledge (cf. Colossians 2:3) and has no need of the exercise of the virtues, as, indeed, he who knew no sin (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21), but (who) gave us the example of an excellent life by what he did according to the economy.

But these valiant men were not lacking the “epōmides” either, or the shoulder-pieces, which (are placed) on the shoulders; and it is with cheerfulness that they

put one on each of their shoulders. There were also there sorts of belts (placed) on the shoulders, since, like chains, they were braided of gold and other threads of beautiful colors; they surrounded the chest and at the same time tightened the priestly tunic. They offered the image of the love of labor and the intellectual practice of the virtues. And this was indicated by the sacred Book, which says of Issachar, one of the sons of Jacob: "He bowed his shoulder to work, and became a man who tills the soil" (Genesis 49:15). Indeed, the Pharisees, on the one hand, were blamed by our Savior, because they placed on the shoulders of men burdens heavy and difficult to bear, while they themselves would not touch a load even with the tip of their finger (cf. Matthew 23:4). Basil and Gregory, on the other hand, shining with the pontifical shoulder-pieces, bore patience and love of labor, when they gave the example of work to those who (were) under their authority; and by (their) works they urged them on and cried out that the yoke of the Gospel is easy and its burden light (cf. Matthew 11:30).

Then, they presented on their chest the breastplate of judgments, called “logeion”, or rational. For the senses, it was, according to the model of the Law, a double fabric, which measured a span both in width and in length; and it, too, was decorated with gold and with colors that (come) from dye, and it was adorned on top with four rows of precious stones. And, for the understanding, it signified and indicated the edifying and proven purity of the reasonable and principal part of the soul—of that, indeed, gold is the example—and the firm and sound judgment which (relates) to good actions, invariable, announced to the whole world and clear; this is what the sparkling stones signify, while they also signify by the redoubling of the number "four" of the rows, that (the breastplate) was completely closed on all sides. And it was double, since this fabric was lined and rolled upon itself; and it signified that the priest must (treat) the reasonable movements of his thought, as if he sent them back again, made them return upon themselves and doubled them by (his) reflections, so that he has security from all sides.

When, therefore, (these pontiffs) wore the breastplate of judgments thus made and finished, they had upon it science and truth (cf. Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8). Indeed, it was something that was skillfully worked and that fell under the senses, according to the book of the Law; and for the understanding it signified and showed the superior revelations of divine things and the manifestation of truth; for

he who possesses in (its) purity the reasonable movement and who is thus enlightened and fortified shines with the true light. After those who give occasion to this present solemnity were enlightened by this (light), they showed a doctrine rich, full and abundant, by correcting and educating fierce and wild morals, by bringing out thus as from secret places the natural contemplation of the wisdom of the Creator, which presents itself in the creatures that are seen and fill the world, by drawing from on high by intelligence and by word the sublimity of theology, as much as it is grasped, and by making it pass to others by a weighed personal intelligent judgment.

They wore, indeed, the “logeion”, or rational, called not simply "breastplate," but "breastplate of judgments." Thus they were also stewards and spiritual intendants of the depth of the divine Book, by not despising or suppressing at all the superficial beauty of the letter and its external simplicity, and by drawing and sucking according to the degrees of a consummate science the wealth of the spirit that was hidden there, and not getting drunk from ignorance on the “akraton” cup, or unmixed, of the diversity of erroneous explanations or of fiction, having been washed with the deceptions of heretical chatter and having adulterated and falsified the beauty of truth by fabulous tales proper to the interpretation of dreams. Indeed, it was better for them to be humbled in the manner of the Jews with the Book which is understood in a miserable way, and not to arrive, through an ignorant and insolent pride, at the place of the wheats that nourish and are suitable for reasonable souls, at the lightness of the straw, which suits beasts and is without reason. One of the prophets justly said similar words: "A handful that has no power to make flour" (Hosea 8:7).

But such are not the great Basil and Gregory the theologian, who for me are a breastplate, or a rational, of judgments, and science and truth. And my words poor in all respects, I put and compare them with their doctrines inspired by God; and if ever I find, often considering their doctrines as a mirror, that my words do not present a resembling image, immediately I correct them and strive to make them rise to their resemblance, they who because of this had a breastplate of judgments thick, solid and strong, because, according to a commandment of the Law, it was suspended by these shoulder-pieces which (are placed) on the shoulders, and it was joined and attached with patience and love of labor. Indeed, (the Book) says

clearly: "You shall not separate the breastplate from the shoulder-piece which is on the shoulder" (Exodus 28:28). It was a shoulder-piece braided like a chain; and it had little round shields, or little long shields, which were adjusted and joined to this breastplate, (and) which were made with gold and with the mixture of many colors. And they could, because of their circular form, be called both wheels and “plakes”, or little plates, or something similar. But it is fittingly that they are named "little round shields," or "little long shields," because the pontiff must, whether before him or behind him, surround himself, as with a shield, with the vigilance that guards, lest perhaps an adverse thought from wicked spirits strike against this “logeion”, or breastplate, trouble the examination of judgments and cause science and truth to depart because of a mixture of wickedness.

The pontiff must, as the first combatant and war chief, also hold out this shield for those who hear the judgments of the “logeion”, or breastplate, (who) are instructed by it and (who) have part in the light of science and truth, and that he drive far from them any attack that (comes) from the assailants. It is under it that Basil and Gregory defended the Church, when they valiantly broke the enemy blows and assaults of Arius, Eunomius and Macedonius; and now also they still defend it, by making their dispositions against every heresy, and they overthrow it and defeat it. And they wear the sacred plate on their forehead (cf. Exodus 28:36-38); and with unveiled face, with Paul, they reflect the glory of the Lord (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18). And they crown their head, as with a crown, with the beautiful appearance which (results) from all these (ornaments). And on top they are covered with the tiara, a sort of round helmet, circular, adapted to the top of the head, thin and pointed. In a certain way, it presents the appearance of the sky and it indicates perfectly and clearly and as is fitting for priests that, being all clothed with the progress of the virtues from the bottom to the top, they are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. May it also happen to all of us not to appear as strangers there on the day of judgment, by the grace and by the charity of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom belongs glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages! Amen!

## HOMILY 117 ON THE EPIPHANY. TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is the greatness and what is the nature of the salvation which took place through the waters of the Jordan, it is within our reach, even by what the prophets have shown us in advance by a sign, to imagine it a little and to admire it in our intelligence and to praise the God who has thus arranged this. Indeed, Isaiah, with a very strong voice, represents in advance the entire inhabited earth in the likeness of a land that is: thirsty, arid, dry, deserted and barren, which, after having received into its veins this abundant river that flows from heaven and having drunk from it and become intoxicated by it, suddenly became a meadow, produced flowers of evangelical life and even trees of every kind, and imitates, or rather eclipses, the mountains, which are for all an object of admiration because of the greatness and multitude of their trees.

Grant me, indeed, that someone, in a narrative and a history of the earth which is so great and, to put it briefly, infinite, should have recounted in advance its dryness, its sterility, its aridity, its desert state, its desolation and the fact that it does not expect and the fact that it despairs of the existence and production of all fruits and grass or of a root, and that then, suddenly and against all expectation, that same person should have examined with his gaze, and directed his eyes, and seen that this land which was so vast is prosperous, has everything in abundance and appears covered with fruits and plants, and that at once because of the thickness and height of what has grown there it is impossible at first sight to know that there is earth there. Why then would such a person not proclaim the glory of the one who changed this in this manner? But it is better to say: How would he not be immobile with stupor and remain like a deaf person without understanding and without speaking, seeing that it is above all speech and above all intelligence that this change is thus worthy of God, a change of which Isaiah speaks, when God accomplishes the miracle in advance mysteriously in a prophetic vision, and of which he speaks, not to show the greatness of what appears, but so as not to leave without witness such a great mystery which must take place, to be confirmed by a prediction which concerns it and to be a subject of admiration only because it was announced in advance prophetically, and not because it was said as is fitting and because it is a weak and very small part of the changes which happened in reality? For, if it were not necessary for him to prophesy, necessarily he would honor the

greatness of the event with silence; and it is after it was figured in the future in his thought that he grasped the miracle within himself as if it were in the present and before his eyes.

But let us see how the vision tries to represent in advance in a figure the image I have spoken of, of this land which was dry and which was changed for fertility and vigorous vegetation, because the image can, indeed, ravish our ears with admiration, while being far removed from the truth and keeping its distance. The prophet therefore seems to stand at a distance, to look, to consider carefully, and to cry out thus to that which was to receive such a charity: "Rejoice, thirsty desert; let the desert be in gladness" and "let it flourish like the lily! And it shall bud forth and rejoice like the forest; and the deserts of Jordan shall rejoice; and the glory of Lebanon has been given to it, and the honor of Carmel; and my people shall see the glory of the Lord and the majesty of God" (Isaiah 35:1-2 LXX). That is why the desert—and that was there, to put it briefly, every soul of the nations which are on earth, which was sick with the complete emptiness of God—has finished and ceased to be thirsty. Indeed, the soul has not only drunk, but it has rejoiced and been satisfied, and by the waters of the Jordan it has had the source of life, which is Christ, who dwells in it, or rather who springs from it; for it hears Paul who says: "Christ dwells in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16-17), when the soul has been powerfully strengthened by the Spirit. And the uninhabitable soul has become both the temple of God and the dwelling of the Holy Spirit; for the same Apostle said to it: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). How, indeed, would it not obtain this, the soul which has flourished like the lily, and which has acquired the great whiteness of the lily and its brightness and has become white by the waters of the Jordan, and which has acquired its good odor, because it has fulfilled the evangelical precepts and cried out again with Paul: "We are the good odor of Christ for God" (2 Corinthians 2:15)?

And the prophet did not only say: "(The desert) shall flourish", as if the flower admits the fact of fading; but, after that, immediately he declared next: "It shall bud forth likewise and rejoice like the forest; and the deserts of Jordan shall be in gladness" (Isaiah 35:2), that is to say the soul shall put forth branch upon branch by the progress of the virtues; and, from the point of view of abundance, thickness and

height, it shall imitate the trees which are in the forests; or rather, to understand the phrase "It shall rejoice like the forest" in a lofty manner, the soul shall rejoice against matter, despising goods and possessions, because it rejoices in spirit, as well as the other things which pass away, among which this world conducts itself and exercises itself and runs towards an incorporeal and immaterial life, which the soul also appeared to have done, as the Book of Acts recounted, saying: "All those who possessed lands and houses, when they sold them, brought the prices of what was sold and laid them at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed and given to each according as he had need" (Acts 4:34-35).

The same thing was also shown by the myriads of those who have truly undertaken to live the philosophical life of monasticism and have stripped themselves of everything for Christ. It is in this manner, and in a similar manner, that the desert fields which were mentioned have flourished and budded forth, namely those of the Jordan; for, he says, the “eremoi”, or the deserts, of the Jordan shall be in gladness (Isaiah 35:2). And indeed, after having watered them by its luminous overflowing and made them bear fruit, the Jordan has made it that they are rightly called its deserts. This is what the land which was formerly dry and thirsty has produced, and "the glory of Lebanon has been given to it, and the honor of Carmel" (Isaiah 35:2).

It escapes no one that Mount Lebanon belongs to the land of the Phoenicians, where there was an important cult of demons and a rich and great praise of the elevated and false gods, and that Carmel is also a mountain of maritime Phoenicia, which reaches to Galilee, where Elijah the Tishbite, the God-inspired Book says, used to dwell and abide without relations and in silence, and lived and conversed with God alone (cf. 1 Kings 18:19, 42). It is therefore because the Church, which was formerly a solitude and a desert, and welcomed those who believed from among the Jews and from among the nations which were more idolatrous than all and recruited itself from both, after they had changed and retracted from their first belief, that the prophet says consequently that the honor and glory of these will pass to the desert, and that to such a point that it will exceed in height above all. Why do I say that it will exceed, when what exists is considerable and it is impossible to say what its greatness is? For it will be in the thought of the glory of the Most High God and will participate in it as much as is possible. That is why

Isaiah declared next, showing that one must not examine this change curiously and compare it with another: "And my people shall see the glory of the Lord and the majesty of God" (Isaiah 35:2).

One can see from this and from history itself how that which is the honor of Carmel began to pass to the deserts of the Jordan. Indeed, it was by reproducing very widely the angelic and incorporeal model of the glorious way of life of Elijah, who lived philosophically on Carmel, that John came to the desert of the Jordan. For, just as, in depicting Elijah, the sacred Book said: "(He was) a hairy man, and girded with a leather girdle about his loins" (2 Kings 1:8), so also John, not only hairy but also with a body hardened, rough and become like stone, and who is completely unknown to men and who lived and stayed in deserts and in unaccustomed places, appeared in a wonderful way girded around his loins with the same girdle (cf. Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6); and just as that one made use of a “melote”, that is to say a garment of sheepskin, and covered himself with it, in the same way, and with even more patience, this one also covered himself with a garment made of camel's hair (cf. Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6); and just as Elijah must be the forerunner before the second coming of Christ, according to the prophecy of Malachi, which says: "Behold, I send you Elijah the Tishbite, before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord" (Malachi 4:5), in the same way John also was the forerunner before the first advent. That is why Our Lord also, because of his resemblance which appears in whatsoever way, said of John clearly: "And if you will receive it, this is Elijah, which is to come" (Matthew 11:14); and in another place again: "But I say unto you, That Elijah is come already, and they knew him not" (Matthew 17:12); and after that the evangelist declares: "Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist" (Matthew 17:13).

That is why Gabriel also, reporting a revelation to Zechariah, his father, and making known in advance the birth of John which was to take place as well as what was to happen on its occasion, said: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God; And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just" (Luke 1:16-17). And for the moment we must look at this: How did the angel say: "And he shall turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God?" (Luke 1:16) and add: "And he shall go before him?" (Luke 1:17).

Thus, consequently, the Lord and the God of Israel was the Christ, before whom John ran, turning the hearts of the fathers to the children. And what is that? The Jews were fathers both of John and of the apostles and of all those who preached the Gospel. For it is from them that they descend in direct line and by kinship of blood and by the ancestral doctrines of the Law and the prophets. But yet, while they were their fathers, they had become blind towards the Gospel due to pride, jealousy and unbelief, not recognizing the Christ, about whom the prophets had prophesied in advance, towards whom both John and the apostles, as compassionate sons, inclined them and drew them, giving them the hand, because they did not see, and showed them the truth, washing away the rheum of unbelief and drawing them towards their own justice and their own wisdom. That is why, indeed, the angel, explaining what is the phrase: "He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children", added: "And the disobedient to the wisdom of the just" (Luke 1:17). For, that it is so, Our Lord himself also showed it, when to the Jews who blasphemed and said: "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matthew 12:24), making known in advance the miracles which were to take place in the same way by the apostles as well as their power against the demons with the help of the Holy Spirit and confounding them, he said: "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges" (Matthew 12:27; Luke 11:19). Likewise Elijah also, when he comes as the forerunner of the second advent of Christ, will turn back the Jews who remain in ancestral error and pride themselves on playing the role of fathers to the truth of the apostles, of John and of all those who were considered to be in the condition of sons, so that that which remains of Israel may be saved (cf. Romans 9:27), according to what the Apostle says.

Do you see how John has changed and made the Carmel of Elijah pass to the very deserts of the Jordan, and how—what is more—he has run beyond? Indeed, the people saw the glory of the Lord and the majesty of God (Isaiah 35:2), namely the Emmanuel, who because of the lowest degree of the incarnation descended to the waters, purified them completely and made of them a bath, a purification of all the inhabited earth, and the voice of the Father, which testifies that he is the Son by nature, and not that he became so by grace, and the Holy Spirit, who, when Jesus ascended out of the water, remained on him flying in the likeness of a dove and, by this corporeal appearance, made known that even without a body he was in Christ,

since he belonged to him by essence according to essence. And indeed, if this were not so, necessarily the Spirit would have come upon him when he was down in the water. But Jesus descended into the Jordan, as he who made himself the firstfruits of our race; and, as he who is the Word consubstantial with the Father, without having departed from the condition of being God, he made by his descent into the waters that our baptism be complete, perfect and holy. Indeed, to what the Son does, to what has been done, the Father or the Spirit is not lacking; for one is the operation of the holy Trinity, as also the essence, although it is shared between the hypostases without confusion. Thus consequently, on the one hand, the Son himself, who for us was incarnate and made man, was baptized according to the economy and, when he was baptized, he sanctified the waters; on the other hand, to the sanctification itself the Father and the Spirit were not lacking. After the coming out of the water, it is by the appearance of a dove that this becomes known to us; it is by a voice that that, namely the opening of the heavens, is the knowledge of the Father. For he whom we did not know to be God, that one, we know as Father; the descent of the Holy Spirit, all the treasures of divine science.

Henceforth the royal dwellings on high are open. Indeed, after Adam closed the heavens to us by sin, and those born of him fell into the flesh, to the point that God even said: "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh" (Genesis 6:3), nothing or little descended from there to us. But, when the second Adam, Christ, showed himself the pure firstfruits of our race, the bolt of heaven, which seemed unable to be opened, was removed and broken. Also Mark, using a more significant expression, said not that the heavens were opened, but that "they were rent asunder" (Mark 1:10), in order to show clearly that this belonged only to the economy of the Emmanuel, namely to take by force, to tear and to separate what cannot be separated. That is why those who had believed in Christ had the heavens opened, and it is without hindrance that they entered there by contemplation. Thus Stephen, the first of the martyrs, as he stood in the midst of the assembly of the Jews and had been rapt in his spirit and had fixed his gaze on heaven, saw the glory of God, that is the opening of the heavens, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:55), and who by a similar appearance taught and instructed him to stand, not to lower himself and not to bend the knee in the combat for piety; for it is in connection with the facts in question that the objects of revelations and contemplations also appear.

And in this regard it is rightly that someone will be perplexed, reading how the Baptist, while he said first: "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16), said after that: "And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33). However, the meaning of these words was known in advance and evident. Indeed, when the Pharisees had sent some disciples and were questioning to learn if he, John, was the Christ, he denied it. But, when he wanted to show that his own testimony concerning Christ was true and exempt from all passion and hypocrisy, he said: "And I knew him not" (John 1:33). It is not by human knowledge, as you think, O Pharisees, that I know him, as being of the same family and the same age and participating in the same habits and the same way of life as me, on which there is a contribution in testimonies. And indeed he was unknown to me by that knowledge, because all my life I have sojourned in the desert, so that it is not thus that I knew him, as you think. But he that sent me to baptize with water made that one known to me by a divine knowledge.

This can be understood in another way, which is likewise true, or rather which is lofty and higher. Indeed, just as it is written of Moses that it is as a friend with a friend that he was with God and that he spoke with him, and that face to face (cf. Exodus 33:11), as the sacred Book says, and that a little later, when a clearer and more evident contemplation appeared to him, he said: He saw only that which is behind God (cf. Exodus 33:23), and that Paul also, writing to the Corinthians, wrote: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Corinthians 13:9-10), it is in this manner that John also knew Jesus, saying both: "He baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33), and also: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). But, after having seen the Spirit descend and remain on him—a dwelling worthy of God and ineffable, by which both the Son dwells in the Father and the Father dwells in the Son, according to what was said by him: "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (John 14:10-11)—then he considered the first knowledge as ignorance because of the superiority of that which followed, and

he said: "And I knew him not" (John 1:33), and that while he thought he knew him. And likewise the phrase: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water" (Matthew 3:16), stops the extravagances of the impure Manicheans. Indeed, those who about everything tell extravagant stories and maliciously invent old wives' tales say that he who was baptized remained below, and that the water gave in appearance another in place of him who is in truth, so that he possesses nothing of the truth which is not calumniated by them, and, to speak in juster terms, which does not show him more esteemed, he who shines more even by that in which he is calumniated. And indeed, "when Jesus was baptized", says the Book, "straightway he went up out of the water" (Matthew 3:16); and it says: "Jesus himself", and: "Straightway", in order to bring upon their error a severe sentence of death.

We needed to discuss this, without despising what seems to be of little importance, to sound the riches of the divine Books, to fear and dread falling into doctrines of bad quality sometimes under an appearance of piety. How is it not senseless, indeed, that absolutely no one calls himself a carpenter and locksmith, without knowing the trade or practicing it, and that those who call themselves Christians are, to put it briefly, uninitiated in the divine Books and that they can easily be led into error by those who wish to? That is why Paul said: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5). Let us pray therefore, and address and present laborious supplications to him who has shone for those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death and who in the likeness of the sun has shed upon the Jordan the light of the unique divinity which is comprehended in the holy Trinity; and let us ask him to grant us that which is proven both in manner of life and in faith, for the glory of his manifestation. To him be glory and power also, with the Father and his life-giving and consubstantial Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 118 ON THE WOMAN OF BAD LIFE, THAT IS TO SAY, THE SINNER, RECORDED IN LUKE. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Just as those who have seen on a canvas a perfect and remarkable painting and perhaps a very beautiful image of a man or a woman, embellished by art and by the brilliance of colors and worked with care to (achieve) the highest degree of beauty, attach and fix their eyes upon it with great application, and, remaining open-mouthed before what appears, have pleasure in a certain way and enjoy that sight to satiety, and are suspended by the sight which is very “dear to them, and that, while often their feet advance and they go away (themselves), they still look in their thought at what their eyes have let escape, after having been torn away by force and with great difficulty; in the same way, when I heard that the book of the God-inspired Gospels has painted a woman of bad life, has represented her to us by the word and brought her before (our) eyes more manifestly and (more) clearly than any painting and (any) image made with art, but a (woman) of bad life, who by regret suddenly repents of perversity and who by the knowledge of what she does is secretly changed even very quickly, who strips off shame and appears manifestly a statue of perfection and a book before everyone, after having fixed my ears like eyes on the narrative and having been rapt in my intelligence towards this living, animated, and very profitable image which is not known only by what is seen on her exterior, but appears rather by the thoughts which (are) in depth, because, I cannot hold this pleasure within myself, I go out and come in public, to tell it again also before you yourselves, in some way or another, with a great love of science and with much care. For such are those who are in themselves devoured by the desire of something; they love to repeat often what is dear to them, to cite it very frequently by (their) mouth and to try to make it dearer by the narrative, in order to make those who listen to them also truly participate in their desire, and who praise the beloved object as one that would not be outside of speech.

But, if it pleases, let us repaint and represent again the image from the holy Gospels, as well as from a model still. One of the Pharisees asked, that is to say, prayed, Jesus to eat with him. And, after he had entered the house of that Pharisee, he sat down at the table. And behold, (there was) in the city a woman who was a sinner. And, when she knew that (Jesus) was at the table in the house of the Pharisee, “after she had brought an alabaster vase (full) of perfume, that is to say,

of perfumed oil, and had stood behind, near his feet, all in tears, she began to water his feet with her tears; and she wiped them with the hairs of her head and kissed his feet, and she anointed them with perfume". (Luke 7:36-38)

Oh! It is by the charity of Jesus, or rather by the miracle, that I am blamed. Indeed, one is astonished by the sweetness of God, who applies himself to change evil by good. For it is with the envious Pharisees, with those murderers who (fought) against him, and who at his mere sight burst (with jealousy), (and) who could not even see him, and who, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, took against themselves a bad deliberation and said furthermore: "Let us bind the just, because he is useless to us" (Isaiah 3:9-10 LXX), that he consents to share the table and the salt, in order to invite them to peace, while they were furious, and, while they would not change, to deprive them of all excuse. For there is nothing which, like participation at the table and the meal, can thus unite together even those who are enemies and who fight each other the most. Likewise also the great mystery of piety, because it unites the members of the Church into one (body) and has that entire object in view, (namely) that we be in a thought which (relates) to the unity which (exists) in the holy Trinity and that we be mixed into one (whole) by participation in the light which shines from there, as he, too, that one of the Trinity, Christ, says, so that "all may be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21), (the great mystery of piety, I say) is celebrated by a holy table and by a single common banquet, in which we share with the same honor, when it recalls to us the words of Paul and invites us at the same time to good accord and cries out by what is done: "By supporting one another with love, by being careful to preserve the unity of the spirit by the common bond of peace; (there is) one body and one spirit, as also you have been called to one hope of your vocation" (Ephesians 4:2-4); and again: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread and one (same) cup." (1 Corinthians 10:17)

But, while it is with the instructor and the teacher of such sacred doctrines and (with) God that this Pharisee was eating his meal outside of propriety, that he was lying with him on one and the same table couch and that he was looking at (his) face, he did not see and did not understand the greatness of him who had lowered himself to him. And, when he raised his forehead with pride, he still thought that

he had done a favor to Jesus and that (he) owed him a thank you. Now the sinful woman, even when she stood — and (that) secretly — behind and did not consider herself worthy to be seen by those eyes full of mercy and divine peace, recognized him who was not looking at her and was lying on the table couch, and, keeping silence, she presented a supplication to him as to one who hears the heart. She poured, indeed, tears which uttered a voice and which flowed abundantly and descended on those divine feet; and, she wiped them with the hairs of her head, and she kissed his feet, and she anointed them with the perfume. (Luke 7:38) But the Pharisee, who had invited him, seeing it, spoke within himself, saying: "This man, if he were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." (Luke 7:39) "This is a sinner." What prophet exists, indeed, O Pharisee, who would have horror of sinners and would push far from him their touch as impure? Do you not hear the Sacred Books, to the point of not knowing that it was on the bones of the prophet Elisha who was dead that a dead Syrian brigand was thrown and that by (their) touch he came back to life? (Cf. 2 Kings 13:21)

How are you not led to the truth by the prefigurations of the Law? Those, indeed, were made in advance by the prophets, so that, when you see that Jesus not only raised others, but also raised himself — for that belongs to God alone, who makes use of his own power — you believe that he himself is truly he who said: "I am the life and the resurrection" (John 11:25), he who beforehand also made similar (miracles) done by the prophets, so that there be no Jew who does not share in the examples of the fathers, but (that), as by preliminary teachings, he be led from there to the perfection of faith in Christ. Thus consequently the touch of the sinful woman did not escape Jesus, as that Pharisee thought; but he knew clearly that she had touched him rather by her heart, and not by her hands, and it is with pleasure that he took (the touch) for himself. And it is to lead him to this thought that (Jesus) presses again the Pharisee by what he exposes to him in parables, by “unveiling the bitterness of his thought. "A certain creditor," he says indeed, "had two debtors. The one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?" (Luke 7:41-42) And, when Simon — for it was, indeed, the name of the Pharisee — answered, he said: "I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most." And (Jesus) said to him: "You have judged rightly." (Luke 7:43) "You, O

Pharisee, have a coarse view, you scrutinize a touch of the hand and you judge (this) woman as one who is not pure. As for me, I see the depth of her thought, where all has concurred; she has been conscious of (her) own sins, she has wept, she has loved, as proof of (her) love she has made a gift of this perfumed oil. However, I was not without concern for the love of this one; for as God I always notice the movement of her soul, and in advance I go to meet the payments; for her love I have in advance granted the remission of many debts, before you yourself have judged the external touch as impure, because the woman has been in advance purified interiorly. Thus, consequently, she was not sinful, o that one, she whom you believe sinful. But, after having recognized the richness of the gift, she has balanced for him an equal weight by an overload of love." (Cf. Luke 7:47)

Do you see how what is visible in the image is brilliant? Let us seek therefore, and see that what is hidden is more brilliant. This Pharisee, indeed, presents the figure of the synagogue of the Jews, with which the Word of God first dwelt, when, as in a single house, he was known only in Palestine and he appeared near a tent of testimony, as he also said by the mouth of the prophet Nathan to king David, who wanted to build a temple: "I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have “walked in a tent and in a tabernacle." (1 Chronicles 16:5 LXX / 2 Samuel 7:6) And it is thus that he participated with them in a spiritual table, when he set before them the commandments of the Law, which on the one hand were elementary, that is to say, the letters of the beginning of the teaching of small children, and on the other hand were heavy with the perfection of the worship of spiritual service, (and) when he sent by the prophets who instructed and taught not only for what is present, but also learned by prophecy what was to come, and finally when he rose up among them according to the economy, appeared by the advent in the flesh and lived with them (Cf. Baruch 3:38), that he helped them in different ways even despite themselves and that, at the end of the economy, he took place at the table and lay down in Jerusalem as in a house of the Jews by a sepulture of three days. That is why he also said: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24); and he still ordered his disciples: "Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:6), because everywhere he had preference for (the Jews), in order to show them that, when they do not believe, they are strangers to all remission.

But, while inactive they were at the table and (lying) on the table couch, without eating as would be fitting for those who would have the desire for the things of God, and that they had tasted, were immediately satiated and had spoken insults — for "Jacob ate and was filled, and the beloved kicked" (Deuteronomy 32:15 LXX) — the sinful woman entered unexpectedly into the house. And it is from herself that the Church came, which recruited itself from among the nations which (are) on all the inhabited earth, and it is of her own free will that she believed in Christ, who was at the table with the unjust and the ungrateful. And (the Book) said very well: "Behold, a woman which was a sinner" (Luke 7:37), not in one manner only, but in all the different manners from the point of view of sin and from the point of view of prostitution. Indeed, the divine Book is accustomed to name "prostitution" every sin in general, and above all the abandonment of the adoration and worship of God, whenever they are rendered to inanimate idols, instead of him who alone is God, as well as to stones and woods. That is what David also says, singing to God, again: "Every one that forsakes you shall be ashamed" (Cf. Psalm 73:27 LXX?); and concerning some again: "The land also was defiled with blood, and was polluted with their works: and they went a whoring with their own inventions" (Psalm 106:38-39 LXX); and likewise in Judges also: "And they could not any longer stand before their enemies because of all their whoredoms, and the hand of the Lord was against them for evil." (Cf. Judges 2:14-15) And the Church had therefore come from such actions and (such) habits and she grew up in them, and she was a sinner from the point of view of varied and multiform sin. And likewise the (word) which is written in addition: "Behold, a woman in the city" (Luke 7:37), is very significant. Indeed, she was reputed in some way for the whole city because of perversity, or rather she will be known by every city and by the inhabited earth. And it is when she is thus perverse that she approached, not simply, but after having recognized Christ by the eyes of science; she knew, says (the Book), indeed, that (Jesus) was at the table in the house of that Pharisee (Luke 7:37). She brought gladly an alabaster vase (full) of perfume, (namely) the glorious, true and pure faith, which, as in a glass vase, encloses the action of agreeable odor and formed of a mixture, which (is composed) of all the virtues; for that is the intellectual perfume. And, when she had stood behind, that is to say, after the synagogue, because she was called and received in second place — what the apostles themselves also said to the Jews who did not believe and did not obey the

Gospel: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so has the Lord commanded us, saying, 'I have set you to be a light of the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.'" And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord (Acts 13:46-48) — because therefore the Church which (recruited itself) from among the nations was glad and glorified the word of the Lord, after she had received it with joy, she who formerly was a sinful woman, she weeps concerning what she did formerly, and she rejoices concerning what has already begun and is still awaited, and it is without restraint that she embraces. She embraces, not without doing anything, but by anointing the feet of (Jesus) with the perfume and by attaching herself to his steps by the practice of the virtues.

That is why also, when he examines her and compares her and puts her in front of the synagogue, Christ said to that Pharisee under a symbol: "You gave me no kiss" (Luke 7:45). Indeed, if formerly the synagogue also did something of what is commanded, she did it in no way by love, but rather by fear, slavishly and in the manner of a slave. That is why also, when God gave them the Law, he made threats of punishments which were put before (their) feet and which took place immediately, so that they would bend to the commandments, fearing as slaves to suffer a short time after, and not obeying with love as sons to (their) father; and that was what Paul said, sending (a letter) to the Romans: "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15) For it was said even in that law: "You shall love the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 6:5) but it was not by love that those to whom the Law had been given observed that, but by fear only, as I have said. Here the commandment is broad, and which is very elevated, and which is well developed; it says, indeed: "He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37); and: "He that loses his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 10:39) For he wants the love which is dispersed among men and shared for the homeland, for the race, for the kinship of marriage or for friendship and for all (objects) exterior, to be reunited for him alone. That is what the Church truly showed as a daughter, and as befits adoption, and (that) with ardor, when she rushed towards the dangers (faced) for him, and that she confirmed (her) preaching

by the struggles of martyrdom and by the sufferings (endured) for piety, until she had embraced, to say it briefly, the entire globe. Indeed, although there was even in the Gospels the threat of a fire that is not quenched (Cf. Mark 9:43, 47), however immediately it was not slavishly that she flew and jumped under the effect of fear; for what is distant by distance does not appear terrible to many. It is therefore by love that the Church took upon herself the sufferings which (are endured) for Christ and that she showed herself strong in them. That is why (Jesus) also said to that Pharisee: "This woman since the time I came in has not ceased to kiss my feet" (Luke 7:45). And that also shows well the love for Christ; for he did not say: "He who loves (his) father or (his) mother more than me, that one will suffer something or will be in torments," but: "He is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:37) And it is the property of those who have remarkable beauty to say that, and they are assured to choose without any doubt those they desire, because it is also after the sinful woman had been wounded by this (love) that she kissed his feet and bent her (own) head, wiping with her hair the humidity of the tears. And it is after having heard the reproach: "If I wash you not, you have no part with me," that Peter, because he was afraid, said: "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." (John 13:8-9) And this one, it is with ardor, as one who loved, that she made it so that her sinful head touched those divine feet; and, while she was washed by the water which (proceeded) from the tears which flowed and descended by the soles of the feet of Jesus, (that head) was filled with all knowledge, whereas formerly she had no consciousness of the sins which were committed' as a result of the habit which (dated) from long ago.

Indeed, a lock of hair seems to be something insensible, since it is cut without causing pain in the body, as (do) the members, when they are cut. When therefore (the sinner) wiped the feet with her hair, she destroyed the insensibility in herself. That is why also she was conscious of the great pardon of sins, and she loved much; for "to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little" (Luke 7:47).
That was said to reprimand that Pharisee and the synagogue, which thinks that because of the justice which (is) in the Law — (justice) which it has not even accomplished — it needs a small pardon. For he who is perfectly conscious, even if he seems very just, knows well that he needs a great pardon, and, as one to whom much is forgiven, he regards as little even all love, and he will say what is

written in the Song of Songs: "If a man would give for love all the substance of his house, it would be utterly contemned." (Song of Solomon 8:7)

If therefore someone wants to love Christ, let (it) not (be) with an ineffective love, but let him anoint him with the perfume of virtues, observing every commandment, and not observing this one and not observing that one; for the perfume is made of all (the commandments). Such is also the perfume of the pontiff and the teacher. Indeed, Moses heard from God: "Take you also unto you principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: And you shall make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be a holy anointing oil." (Exodus 30:23-25) It is necessary therefore that, just as we have been anointed, so we also bring forth the doctrinal word from the aromatics cited in the Law, and not from some other foreign flower, even if it seems to have a good artificial odor, and that we do not bring it to a secret shame, according to the manner of the fables of the pagans; for such (proceedings) cannot compose a perfume, but rather a mortal poison. And it is still necessary that these perfumes cited in the Law be themselves weighed with the measures and weights stated by the connoisseurs of the art of the perfumer and the priest, I mean by the masters of orthodoxy, that we chase far away what comes out of their domain and that we regard it as impiety, even if it is from the heavens that he who says it comes (Cf. Galatians 1:8). If it is in this manner, indeed, that the doctrinal and unaltered perfume is mixed with the perfume of the actions of the listeners, we will all be, according to the word of Paul, "the sweet savour of Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:15). To him be glory throughout the ages! Amen!

**HOMILY 119 ON THE WEDDING FEAST RECORDED BY THE EVANGELIST JOHN, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN CANA OF GALILEE, WHERE CHRIST, HAVING ALSO BEEN INVITED THERE, CHANGED WATER INTO WINE. AND THAT MARRIAGE IS HONORABLE. AND ADDRESSED TO A CERTAIN ROMANOS, WHO IN A BLASPHEMOUS AND CONTRADICTORY MANNER CHANGED THROUGH A DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION THE WORD OF THE HOLY GOSPELS PLACED BEFORE US.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

If someone deploys their intelligence according to the breadth of the Book inspired by God and especially according to that of the holy Gospels, they will find many paths of good living, and (they will find) that all lead to God, that they are full of holiness, that they prepare for the future and that they invite to eternal life; for to live well is to not abandon the side of God. They will believe they hear Him speaking through the prophet Jeremiah to all those who want to hear: “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” (Jeremiah 6:16)

Behold, indeed, the Word of God the Father, who spoke in the past by the prophets, when in the last times He was incarnated and became man, in an ineffable manner and at once without change and in truth, from the Holy Spirit and from the essence of the holy Mary, Mother of God and ever-virgin, and by this He inaugurated the way of virginity, (a way) which on one hand encompasses this present world, which is completed at once by the procreation of children and by the divine command saying: “Be fruitful, and multiply” (Genesis 1:28), and (which) on the other hand passes into the future (world) which the resurrection will show new, since those who are to resurrect must be in heaven like angels (cf. Mark 12:25) and must not have need of the help of marriage, because they remain constantly without coming into existence anymore nor dying, (the Word of God, I say), knowing that the excellence of celibacy is also difficult to subject to a rule and as God deciding by a law what suits the strength of our nature, did not define by written laws that we must apply ourselves to virginity; but, that it should be the object of a voluntary zeal, it which is so beautiful and (so) good and which leads to an equality of honor with the angels, He desired it, without demanding it, rather drawing by love and not pushing by the constraint of legislation. For what is found

in a law, it is of absolute necessity to do it; but what is the object of zeal and which is outside the law is the prerogative of those who choose of their own free will.

That is why Paul, obeying the will of his God and his teacher, writes, not as an oppressor, but in the form of advice, a warning that relates to this, and he teaches thus: “Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment...” — And say what advice you give. — “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” (1 Corinthians 7:1); and again: “I think therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.” (1 Corinthians 7:26-28). He called "trouble in the flesh" what is added to the cares and worldly pains of marriage. For “he that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:32-33). And he does not say (this) so that one would thus have an aversion for marriage as defiled and impure. For he knows it to be so pure that he even says concerning the marriage of an unbelieving husband and a believing wife, or conversely: “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” (1 Corinthians 7:14). And in another place he writes: “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled.” (Hebrews 13:4).

When he wants to make known by the facts themselves and teach clearly that marriage is pure and that it does not separate from God at all, he too, our Lord and our God, Jesus-Christ, who was born of a virgin according to the flesh, (who) preserved the virginity of she who gave Him birth, and (that) even after childbirth, and (who) showed in its breadth the way of virginity to the life of the world, rejoiced the wedding feast which (took place) at Cana of Galilee, in the presence of both the Virgin, His mother, and His disciples; for they were invited because of some human friendship and because of (some) kinship as acquaintances. And He who does all things with wisdom (cf. Psalm 104:24) obeyed according to the economy, blessing the wedding feast, in order to also perform the (first) sign and the first miracle there. And this was told by John the theologian alone apart from

the other evangelists, he "who applied himself to virginity and spent all his life without knowing the carnal commerce of marriage and (who) was particularly and specially dear to Jesus. And yet, if marriage were abominable, he should have passed it over in silence for the sake of those who flee the carnal commerce of marriage and pursue the imitation of the angels. But let us see what is the sign that Jesus did, when He honored the wedding feast.

After the wine ran out, (John) says, the mother of Jesus said to Him: “They have no wine.” (John 2:3). By this it is certain that those who had invited Him to the wedding feast did not have superior thoughts about Him or thoughts worthy of God. And indeed, if they had thoughts as is fitting, they would have prayed Him to supply the lack of wine; for he who needs asks to obtain what he needs. But, I have said, it is by knowing Him in a human manner that they extended the invitation to the wedding feast, without having considered at all the height of His divinity. While Mary, in a thought of commiseration, had leaned towards the need of these (people) and was presenting a request, (Jesus) rejects this one, so as not to appear to be seeking vain glory for Himself and to be thinking for Himself of that vainglory with His mother, as if she seemed to have made a request with pretense and that, He, He willingly ran after the exhibition of signs. While He kept the listeners away from this false opinion and showed that it is not for vainglory, but with care and utility, that He did everything, He answers her even very harshly, instructing the listeners, I have said, and teaching the truth, and not wanting to despise (His mother): “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.” (John 2:4). Indeed, that these words were not a reprimand, but a manner of instruction because of the strangers, His mother made it known. For it is not as one who had been reprimanded that she withdrew and distanced herself, and it is not as one who had received a blame that she remained silent and repented of (her) boldness. But, while she knew in her spirit what was happening, it is as if Jesus had said absolutely nothing that she said to the servants: “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.” (John 2:5), wanting to show still something that is greater and more fitting to God. And, putting Himself in accord with this thought of (His mother), who was thinking of what is very grand, (Jesus) said: “mine hour is not yet come.” (John 2:4). "You believe," He says, "that suddenly I pursue the realization of grand signs; but know that these are regulated according to suitable times, so that not even a small part of an hour escapes (my) direction and (my) conduct. And indeed

it is in relation to the growth of the bodily stature that I show my divinity little by little and it is with the true progress of the stature that I appear to grow in wisdom and grace (cf. Luke 2:52) of miracles and wonders, because I grant these in a manner that suits God and because however I make them known successively, as the mode of the economy demands, even up to an indivisible instant of time; for what (pertains to) divine actions takes place equally for what is smaller and lesser than everything, even if that is completely unknown to us and difficult to grasp."

It is according to this meaning that in another place of the Gospel also there is concerning the Jews: “Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.” (John 7:30); and, in another place again: “These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.” (John 8:20); likewise: “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.” (John 12:23). Indeed, until the economy was accomplished to the last term and nothing remained of what was known to Him in advance and decreed as such by the wisdom of God, He was absolutely insaisissable for everyone. But He even passed through the midst of them, when they threw stones at Him (cf. John 10:31, 39). And, when everything had come to (its) term, entirely accomplished and terminated thoroughly, as one would say — what seemed good and perfect to He Himself who directed — it is then in truth, it is then that He delivered Himself voluntarily, He who said: “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” (John 10:18). He would not say that, if He were subjected to the necessities of the hours according to the unlikelihood of pagan stupidities. That is why, even after having said to His mother, for the motive that I have said, the (word): “mine hour is not yet come” (John 2:4), immediately He did a sign that belonged not at all to one who is subjected to the observation of hours. At the same time He instructs (us) and He teaches (us) by this, if ever we do not obey mothers who would command us something untimely, even if the refusal seems to involve what is fitting and what is very pleasing, to satisfy them immediately with what is necessary, either by doing what they have commanded, or by another path, and to not abandon them at all in their sadness. “Honour thy father and thy mother,” (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) He says, indeed.

By examining the word with more care, one finds that the Mother of God, both after (her) childbirth and since she served the mystery of the economy, was filled with the Holy Spirit and knew in advance what was going to (happen). For she was a prophetess, as Isaiah says: “And I went unto the prophetess” (Isaiah 8:3). For, if it were not so for her, how would she not think that it is spontaneously, and from nothing, and from something invisible, that Jesus could also put wine before the eyes of all? But, because she knew in advance what was going to happen and that Jesus was going to order the servants to draw water to change it thus into wine, she also, gave them an order in advance, saying: “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.” (John 2:5). Thus the foreknowledge concerning what was going to happen was in some way common to Jesus and to herself, to Him as to God and to her as to she who acts as a prophetess. For He had wanted — and He applied Himself to doing it — to remove from the miracle all suspicion of imagination. For, if it were spontaneously that He had made the wine gush forth and appear in an astonishing manner in the midst of those who were eating, He would be regarded as a liar, without being believed, and (the fact) would seem a hallucination, and an illusion of the eyes and of taste, and a trickery of demons, like what those charlatans also who (operate) in the tent try to do in a deceptive manner, when they imitate the action of performing miracles. That is why (Jesus) prolongs and drags out the lack (of wine), so that those who were eating become conscious of lacking wine for the moment and that thus they do not let the miracle also pass by, but that they learn very clearly. It is not to wait for the observation of the hour, it is not for that that He delayed; for how should the author of the ages (cf. Hebrews 1:2) pay attention to the opportuneness of the hour, and wait, and spy the void that (there is) in that? Indeed, by the fact that He changed the water into wine, He also avoided us imagining an accusation, and by this He showed Himself no less the creator of all things than if He had created the wine from nothing. For He is similarly He who through the intermediary of the vine also changes dew, which is nothing else than water, into wine, and from the same dew (He makes) in the apple tree an apple, and in the fig tree a fig, and He changes according to each species (of tree).

And consider how (the evangelist) develops the miracle by means of varied circumstances, providing it with truth from all sides and cutting off and removing from it the suspicion of a false imagination. “There were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins

apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim." (John 2:6-7). Indeed, as the Law which (was given) through Moses ordered that he who touched something unclean wash his clothes and perform ablutions in water, because of the frequency of such purification, because the country of Palestine is very dry and is not watered by springs and by rivers, but supplies its lack (of water) either by wells or by cisterns, the waterpots in question were those which were full and prepared for this purpose for the Jews, so that they might purify themselves immediately. These (waterpots) therefore, which then, by a certain chance, were found to be empty. Jesus ordered the (servants) to fill them with water, they which had for a long time served for water and where there was absolutely no odor nor anything which has some relation with the idea of wine. Indeed, if He ordered them to use any other pots, one could say that, because there remained some dregs in them, once the water was poured onto it, it received (something) of the quality of wine and (that), as those who were eating were already drunk and for them the discernment of taste was as dead as a result of drunkenness, they took the water for wine.

See therefore that by all (this) the suspicion (of imagination) is set aside. Indeed, it is not the disciples who receive the order to fill the waterpots, but it is these servants, foreign witnesses and who from nowhere bring a contribution to the testimony; and (the order is to fill) not just any waterpots that might be encountered, but those which have been set apart for the use of water for a long time. Those, they filled them, it is said, up to the brim (John 2:7), (so that) they give place to no mixture of wine. And it is thus that Jesus said to the (servants): "Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast;" (John 2:8) and they carried (some). The governor of the feast is not one of those who take place on the couch where one reclines at table; but he is the chief of what is called the "triclinium", that is to say of the small room of the banquet and of what is necessary for it, whose unique occupation, while he is so to speak completely fasting, is to circulate everywhere, to place cooks, servants, cupbearers, to arrange everything and to transport everything for what serves both the interest and the utility of those who are eating. It is to that one therefore that Jesus ordered the (servants) to give the first fruits of the water which had been changed into wine, to him who was awake and who had (all) clear the discernment of taste, to such a point that he testified not only that it was wine, but also that this (wine) was very

good and excellent, saying to the bridegroom: “Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.” (John 2:10).

Such are therefore, according to a simple and easy explanation of the miracle placed before us, the brilliance and the external aspect of the evangelical word. But, for those who can descend with moderation towards the depth of thoughts — for no one suffices in terms of a total contemplation — it is not just any wealth that is found (there). And indeed, the wedding feast signifies and shows that it is as in the gaiety of a wedding feast, that Jesus came by His advent according to the flesh among those who (are) on the earth. For “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John 3:17) and so that He might betroth the Church as a pure virgin in quality of spouse, according to what is said by Paul to the Corinthians: “For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 11:2); it is of Him that John the Baptist also said: “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom:” (John 3:29); and it is of His disciples that He Himself also said: “Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?” (Matthew 9:15).

The wedding feast was therefore an image of the betrothal and the intellectual marriage, (the betrothal) that Christ made and (the marriage) by which He united Himself to our souls, (He who is) the pure bridegroom of the Church. It is in the name of this that this mother (of Jesus), the Virgin Mother of God, when she was present at the wedding feast, when she saw that the wine, (that is to say) the doctrinal word which had been given to the synagogue of the Jews, had run out, because, like innkeepers, its doctors, the princes of the priests and the Pharisees, were mixing like water their own weak and human teachings — they of whom Isaiah also says: “Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:” (Isaiah 1:22) — taking for the object of their teachings the commandments of men, so that henceforth everything became water, and she wanted to push Christ to mercy, (this mother of Jesus, I say) said: “They have no wine,” (John 2:3) almost pressing Him to give even the mystic wine of the mysteries. That is why Jesus answered her: “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.” (John 2:4). "It is not yet time for me to pour the very perfect and very mystic wine, before I bear

the cross and pour out my blood and (that) the Paraclete comes upon those who (are) on the earth. For the moment it is the teaching which resembles water and which is human that I will change into the heat, energy, strength and agreeableness of a spiritual drink; for it is of that that wine is the model."

It was not possible that the taste of this (wine) be examined by the synagogue of the Jews, which was drunk, with whom He was reclining at table because of charity and to whom He gave a share, as much as was necessary, of the doctrine of a banquet which was a wedding feast, when He gave them many beautiful teachings, without however her having noticed them. Its masters of the hotel, they were the (disciples) of Moses and the (disciples) of Abraham, for Moses was faithful as a servant in the house of God (cf. Numbers 12:7; Hebrews 3:5), as it is written; after having tasted even only with the tip of the lips, they knew clearly by the revelations of the prophets that He had kept for the Church the good wine of the evangelical doctrine for the last and at the end of times; “Your father Abraham,” Christ said to the Jews, “rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.” (John 8:56).

These are the goods and profits which suit the divine words and agree with them. But, what has been said in a deceptive manner by some and which changes and falsifies these true meanings by force and in an opposite manner and which leads to blasphemy, one must flee it and turn away one's face from it. And indeed, someone dared to say that this wedding feast offers the image of the corruption which (took place) in paradise, as he says himself, on the third day, and to call "house of pleasures" and "seat of relaxation" the banquet, of which it is said that Jesus also took part, or the man who is figured by Him in the image of God; and he adds concerning Him with blasphemy and ignorance in his own terms: "He drank all this wine by a natural movement." And he presents the Mother of God as a relaxed person, who ran impudently towards concupiscence and even who offered an image of voluptuous sensation; and she said: “They have no wine,” (John 2:3) and because of that she was blamed and heard (said): Woman; and "she spoke to the servants," he says, "to the thoughts inspired by passion." And the Jewish waterpots, he admits that they are the indication of purity and of lively and pious thoughts, and he calls (wine) of passion, and (of) perversion, and of folly which (is) outside of intelligence — for I use the words of that one — the wine which had

been changed from the water by the thaumaturgy of (our) God and our Savior Christ. And he affirms that it is of this (wine) that the prophet said: “Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:” (Isaiah 5:22). Now, of prophecies which present themselves differently, it is like small pieces of cloth that he sews them together by ignorance.

In one place, indeed, the prophet cries woe to those who run after strong drink, and he says: “Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!” (Isaiah 5:11); and, in another place, (he says) that they are drunk without wine, saying: “Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!” (Isaiah 28:1) [Note: The French text cites a specific interpretation: "those who are drunk without wine"]. For whoever is furious and mad with passion, as well as those of whom he prophesies, is drunk with vanity in his intelligence. But he explains that this word has been corrupted, and he says: "When it is not only with regard to natural sin, but also with regard to that which is made against nature, that they were without restraint and without vigilance."

What greatness of blasphemy do these (words) not surpass? Of what refutation do they have a need for (their) ruin, since by their reading they are manifest and clear? Who has divided sin into (sin) natural and into (sin) which is against nature, which sometimes, he himself, that one also says (sin) voluntary? Let him come forward in public and explain the difference he wants (to make)! Indeed, either it is from the will that (sin) is an illness and an error, as it also is; and, when we sin, it is rightfully that we are condemned. Or else, if it is in nature, no one bears the penalty of nature; indeed, we must necessarily trace the cause back to He who created (nature) thus. Who has ever attributed to holy and praiseworthy persons, and equally to Christ, these bad interpretations (based) on a misinterpretation, or, on the contrary, who (has attributed) to (persons) bad and execrable what (is the fact) of perfection and a chaste conduct? Indeed, we must take the words and the meanings according to the qualities which are affirmed of (these) persons. For example, the word "cedar," in the Divine Book, signifies sometimes wickedness, and sometimes perfection. Indeed, it is said sometimes because of sterility and pride: “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green

bay tree." [Note: The French text specifies "like the cedars of Lebanon" from Psalm 37:35]; and sometimes because of its pleasant smell, from the great number of (its) branches, from its life in society, from its circular perimeter, from its opulence, from its extension towards the sky, from its straight bearing: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." (Psalm 92:12). And in the same manner wine also, according to the context, signifies sometimes folly and drunkenness, for example, as what Solomon says in the Proverbs: "For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence." (Proverbs 4:17), and sometimes spiritual doctrine, as one can hear it from the same, where Wisdom says: "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." (Proverbs 9:5).

That is why some are offended at me, because I do not call good and sweet what is bitter and harmful. As for me, I will ask them in a pleasant manner: Would they want and desire that I be such that I dispense the truth according to the good pleasure of men, or else that I cannot discern condemned opinions and that I attach myself to them in the manner of a beast, and that I cannot, conforming to the decisions of Paul, albeit moderately, both comfort by a sound teaching and refute those who contradict (cf. Titus 1:9)? But that is nothing other than if they cursed the Church. And indeed, because of me, it too should run a danger, by learning to think outside of what it must think, it whom the Lord would have placed over the sound faith, guarding it and saving it from the error of heresy and all corruption.

If you threaten to amputate my words, at least, by threatening (this) amputation, you yourself have fallen. Before me, threaten David instead. Easily, indeed, you will show him to be an atheist, as the one who says that for him there is no God. But, when you place and put the (word): "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God" (Psalm 13:1), next to the (word): "There is no God", it is the fool, and not David, that you will incriminate, and you will show that your threat is ridiculous. For Paul would also be the teacher of polytheism according to your word, he who says: "For although there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (for there be gods many, and lords many)" (1 Corinthians 8:5). But, because he said beforehand: "But to us there is but one God, the Father" (1 Corinthians 8:6), that he mocked the error and added: "Yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things,

and we by him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge" (1 Corinthians 8:6-7), he escapes the cold accusation.

"The Ladder" which descends into Sheol — for thus his book was titled by Romanos, the powerful interpreter, who reasoned wrongly in the interpretations he set forth (based on) a misunderstanding —to those who encounter it, without needing anyone to refute it, unless someone is drunk in his intelligence like the one who wrote it and believes that sin is natural and against nature. For the Apostle says of ourselves, who have been saved by the grace of the coming according to the flesh of Christ our Savior: "And we were by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3), that is to say, in (all) truth, sons of wrath; for he who does what is worthy of wrath is named a "son of wrath". And indeed, the Divine Book is accustomed to call those who in their thought are sick with a certain passion and who are possessed and carried away by it the "sons of that passion". This is why Paul also, who said: "We were by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3), said beforehand clearly: "In which also we all conversed in time past, in the desires of our flesh, fulfilling the will of the flesh and of our thoughts" (Ephesians 2:3), that is to say: "And when (we sinned) by the body, and when we sinned by thought." And see the perfection of the Apostle's thought and how it recognizes every kind of sin as a straying of the will and of the thought, which were sick with voluptuousness. And indeed, the act of willing or the act of not willing is proper to the soul, and not of the body. And yet he called the bodily sin "the will of the flesh", showing that it is because of the evil will and because of the soul which carries itself towards what it wants and is carried away with the body that the passions which act through the flesh also exist. And that the Divine Book is accustomed to call those who are the agents of passions "the sons of these passions". David also makes this known, when he sings in these terms: "And the son of iniquity shall not add to hurt him" (Psalm 88:23); and, our Lord also says of Judas: "And none of them is lost, but the son of perdition" (John 17:12); and the Apostle still gave to those who did not believe the Gospel the name of "children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6).

As for natural sin, none of those who have orthodox thoughts have conjectured it. But will you say: "He too, this good (Paul) gave to the bodily (sin) the designation of natural sin, as being the true (sin)". — What then! Is the sin which (is) in the

will false? — "Among sins, indeed, he called some natural, and some voluntary." — And what is the meaning of such a division devoid of (all) science? For we are condemned for every kind of sin, seeing that we have sinned truly, and not falsely.

"Yes," he says. "But, he too, the Apostle, writing to the Romans, said: 'For their women have changed the natural use into that which is against nature' (Romans 1:26)." — And then? Do you not consider that he said: "The natural use", and not: The sin? The natural use of the woman is that by which the procreation of children and the propagation of the race is accomplished, not that which has pleasure as its end, but that which has a fitting and useful end, (namely) the generation of children, by which the form of the world has been maintained. And the use which (is) against nature is that by which the impudent are passionate even for males. The natural use of the woman, therefore, is not a sin, since it is within the law of marriage that it has its defense. But, when the law forbids carnal commerce as illegitimate, for example that which (takes place) with a sister or a mother or with any of the persons of that kind, in the case where someone, after having yielded in his thought, accepts the attraction of pleasure like a hook and transgresses the law, it is not because of the natural use of the woman that I call the slipping of the thought and its sickness, from which results the fact that he would sin, a "natural sin". As I have said, indeed, it is a sickness of the will, and the sickness is not natural; for it is such a disposition of the soul that is the root and cause of sin. And indeed, it is by the movement of the intelligence and by passion that sin and error are judged both in the Divine Book and by all those who have legislated in the cities that are well governed by laws.

And see Saint John, Bishop of Constantinople, explain in the epistle to the Romans this word which we have just examined, expound this in the fourth homily and show that the transgression of the law, when it takes its movement from thought, gives rise to sin and causes it to be fittingly and justly called voluntary, and not natural. "For, everything that transgresses the laws set by God desires what is foreign (to the laws), and not what is determined by laws. For, just as many often, after having renounced the desire for food, eat earth and small stones, and others, when they are in the grip of a violent thirst, often also desire mud, so these also have come in their excess to this love which is against the law. If you say: And whence (comes) such intensity to this desire? — From the abandonment on the part

of God. And abandonment on the part of God, whence (does it come)? — From the iniquity of those who have abandoned him." And again, in the fifth homily, he wrote in these terms: "This is why he did not say: 'And as they liked not to have God in their knowledge' (Romans 1:28), but: 'As they did not think fit to have God in their knowledge', showing that sin is rather the fact of a corrupted judgment and a dispute, and not of a rapture and a deception, and that sins are the fact not of the flesh, as some among the heretics say, but of thought and evil concupiscence, and that it is from there that the source of evils is. For, after the intelligence became reprobate, then everything was destroyed and overturned, once the “hegemonikon”, that is to say he who holds the reins, was corrupted."

Likewise also Gregory the Theologian, in the letter to Cledonius, when he fights Apollinaire who said that the intelligence was not taken by God the Word incarnate for us, when he speaks of Adam who transgressed the divine commandment, expresses himself thus: "For, that which received the commandment did not keep the commandment; that which did not keep the commandment dared also the transgression of the commandment; that which transgressed the commandment especially had need also of salvation; that which had need of salvation was also taken; the intelligence therefore was taken." And this has been demonstrated, albeit in spite of themselves, by logical necessities and geometric demonstrations, as they say.

And likewise the wise and holy Cyril recognizes sin as a sickness, and not as a nature, as well as the corruption which came to the flesh as a result of the sickness of the intelligence, which did not direct as it should and towards what is best the movement of the concupiscence innate in us, or rather which was led by it, seeing that by a shameful voluptuousness it became savage and furious and that from then on it commanded sin to it in the manner of a law. He wrote in these terms in the first letter to Succensus: "We say therefore that, as a result of the transgression of the commandment by Adam, after human nature suffered corruption and the thought which is in us revolted and was constrained by the desires of the flesh, that is to say by the movements innate in us, it was necessary for salvation for us who are on earth, that the Word of God became man, in order to make his own the flesh of man which was subject to corruption and was sick with voluptuousness and that, because he is the life and he gives life, he destroyed the corruption which is in it

and that he repressed the innate movements, namely those which (lead) to voluptuousness. For it is thus that the sin which (is) in it could die. We remember, indeed, that the blessed Paul also called the law of sin (Romans 7:23) the movement innate in us." It is therefore known in advance that the fact that we are sick with voluptuousness, that through it the movement innate in us prevails and becomes a law of sinning for the intelligence which holds the place of chief and that it leads and conducts it as a tyrant, that is sin. But, as for the (sin) which happened as a result of the sickness, no one ever calls it natural.

Whence then did it come to the intelligence of this carpenter of "The Ladder", which struggles with God, to introduce to us this division of sin and to call the bodily (sin) natural and voluntary that which (is) in the thought, and to express himself thus: (He shows that voluntary sin is greater than the natural (sin), and that intellectual fault is more serious than the sensible (fault), because the Calumniator is exempt from material faults; for he has no body." And what kind will one find, tell me, of natural sin, as you say, and which does not have the will for its beginning? We indeed hear the holy Fathers teach, in what has been cited above, that thought is the source of all sins and that it is the fact of heretics to attribute to the flesh the cause of sin.

How do you not also fight the common opinions of all men, you who say that sensible and corporeal sin is lighter than intellectual sin and that which (is) in thought? For it is not the same thing, I think, to welcome in one's thought a desire for adultery and to stop there, as to commit adultery also in body. For, although Our Lord himself condemned for adultery he who has looked upon a woman to lust after her (Matthew 5:28), however there is a great distance and a (great) difference from the corporeal action to the voluptuous movement which (is) in thought. Hence again canon XLVIII, by which the holy Churches are governed, expressed itself thus: "If someone, after having desired a woman, plans to sleep with her, and his thought does not come to pass, it seems that he is saved by grace."

You are therefore manifestly in struggle with the sacred words of the Book inspired by God, with the explanations of the proven doctors and also with the canons and ecclesiastical laws. And you grant pardon to sensible and corporeal sins, and, the natural (sins), as you have said and (that) with praise, you say they are lighter than

those which are committed in thought, for the reason that you have absolutely believed, like the execrable Manicheans, that the body belongs to a part which has the nature of sin and that because of that it is led to sin by a natural necessity. Grant therefore a complete pardon to the nature of the body which is led by force to sin, and do not say, deceiving those who listen, that intellectual faults are more serious than the sensible and corporeal faults. For it is not because the Calumniator did not sin materially and corporeally, but immaterially, that already, because of the resemblance to him, the sins of men which (are) in thought will also be regarded as greater than the corporeal (sins). And indeed the condemnation was increased for him by the fact that he was moreover in an intellectual and angelic condition, and that however, in the face of the divine glory, he made little of it and sinned.
You weave a deceptive net with such cunning that you take occasion to fight the Jews, as if you simulated the word on behalf of the apostles and that you accuse them of saying that sin (is) natural, and not voluntary, in these very terms: "This is why the (apostles) will be judges for you; those who have restored incorruptibility to its first state by their strong and excellent conduct will condemn you, because not only do you not have horror of sin, but you also teach that it is natural, and not voluntary, as if he (?) said: You, indeed, you say: What other thing does God seek, if not the seed? (Malachi 2:15)"

Who will not show astonishment at these (words) which cast a hidden venom among the simple? Indeed, thinking to reproach the Jews under the pretext that they say that sin is only natural, and not, according to his very erroneous, impossible and completely ignorant division, that this one is natural and that one voluntary, it is on his own very malicious thought and on a scriptural testimony that he founds the accusation, when he added afterwards: "You, indeed, he says, you say: What other thing does God seek, if not the seed? (Malachi 2:15)" wanting to show that the emission of the human seed which produces generation is a natural sin.

But we have shown, in what has been said above, O excellent one, that it is neither carnal commerce with the woman defined by the law that is a sin, nor similarly the procreation of children, but the (carnal commerce) which is illegitimate and which as a result of an immoderate voluptuousness goes outside the limits set forth in the law. Otherwise, that the seed is not abominable, listen to the prophet Isaiah who

says: "Blessed is he that hath seed in Sion, and servants in Jerusalem" (Isaiah 31:9); and again: "Your soul shall see a seed of long life" (Cf. Isaiah 53:10), which (seed) is conceived in a sensible manner concerning the procreation of children and is seen in an allegorical manner at the same time concerning the seed of perfection and concerning that of spiritual doctrine, by which (seed) come into existence many children who know God; and, in Deuteronomy, Moses also says: "Blessed be the fruit of thy womb" (Deuteronomy 28:4). And it is (too) long to cite here the testimonies relating to this subject, because they are numerous. But, you, O that one, it is certain that you try to present the procreation of children as impure and full of sin, as one would say, in the manner of the wretched Manicheans and like the Messalians whose murmurs and ramblings are absurd. You have written, indeed, in "The Ladder", shortly before the words which have been cited here, in this manner: "It was also said formerly that Beelzebub is interpreted 'swallower of flies'. And he signifies the spirit of fornication, according to what was said: They said: He hath an unclean spirit (Mark 3:30), which sometimes made him receive within himself, and sometimes chase out all the shameful and evil passions. This is why it is also said: He is the prince of the devils (Matthew 12:24). Indeed, it is before all evils that this one entered first into the first man. After having begun with him, it is with the whole of human nature that henceforth he is born, lives and conducts himself in a shameless and impudent manner. And one can learn this very exactly by the age of small children, who are largely ignorant of the “diathesis”, that is to say the thought, of all the passions, of avarice, of ambition, of selfishness, of pride, of envy, etc., but who knows and cherishes the (passion) of voluptuousness, and (that) even before the fitting time, sometimes because (this age) will be corrupted, (and) sometimes because it will corrupt."

To what shall we pay attention among these (words) which have been said by you, O Romanos, without intelligence, with impiety and with audacity? For it is by an intemperate tasting, and not by fornication, that the Sacred Book says in these terms that the first man, that is to say Adam, was vanquished: "And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat; and, after taking of its fruit, she ate and gave also to her husband with her, and he ate" (Genesis 3:6); which pertains not to fornication, but to gluttony. But you commit still this impiety with the others, by bumping into your "Ladder" which lacks solidity. You say there, indeed, that it was carnally that Adam united with Eve in paradise, and you foolishly affirm that this is

the manducation of the tree, speaking of John the Baptist and the Calumniator, and you write in these terms: "And that one (John the Baptist), as a faithful and true friend, pushing the Church to unite spiritually with Our Lord, promises to (her) that which (is part) of marriage, the kingdom of heaven; and this one (the Calumniator), as a hidden and fatal friend, pushing Eve to unite carnally with Adam, promises to (her) as a dowry the power of God: 'The day,' he says, 'where you shall eat of the tree, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil' (Genesis 3:5). Indeed, really by this pernicious action he slipped in and descended with them." If therefore in paradise the Calumniator appears, after having said that to Eve, and (if) he pushed her to unite carnally with Adam, after having been deceived, and if they did a pernicious action, as you have said, and if the first sin was a fornication, the place of incorruptibility has become a house of fornication, according to your word. But the Divine Book instructs and teaches us differently. Indeed, after having said: "And God sent Adam out of the paradise of pleasure" (Cf. Genesis 3:23-24), then he declared afterwards: "Adam knew Eve his wife: and she conceived and brought forth Cain" (Genesis 4:1). Showing the help which (comes) from the procreation of children and the maintenance of the race which (follows) from it, she said: "I have gotten a man through God" (Genesis 4:1). Know, if you wish — for I will speak to you as if you were present (as) one who is a friend to you — that the doctors of the Church and of the truth do not have the same thoughts as you yourself concerning the manducation of the fruit of the tree, they who teach that this manducation would have raised up to the divine contemplation, if it had been taken opportunely. Gregory the Theologian, indeed, in the homily on the appearance of God, wrote this: "And he gives a law as matter for free will. The law was a commandment, (prescribing) which plants he should eat from and which (plant) he should not touch. This was the tree of knowledge, which was not planted from the beginning with wickedness and was not forbidden out of jealousy — let not those who struggle with God thrust out their tongues there, and let them not imitate the serpent! — but (the plant) was good assuredly, when it was taken in its time — for the plant was contemplation, like my contemplation, to which it is only prudent to ascend for those who are more perfect in their thought. — But (the plant) was not good for those who are simpler until then and who sacrifice more to gluttony by desire, just as complete food is not advantageous for those who are still tender and have need of milk." Thus therefore

that which (belongs) to sin is found in the disobedience: only, and because Adam was vanquished by not eating of the fruit in its time.

How then, according to your word, must we think that the tasting was the fornication, the union of the woman with the man and a shameful action, as you have said, so that the first sin is a (sin) of fornication? This is why you say that both the (sin of fornication) and the unclean spirit which presides over it are born with all humanity. Therefore Paul lies, he who says: "Else were your children unclean; but now they are holy" (1 Corinthians 7:14). How do you say, affirming only like a babbler what comes to your mouth and thinking nothing wise, that children, and (that) even before the fitting age, are inclined to fornication more than to other passions? They appear, indeed, to be especially greedy by taste, to get angry and to be jealous of one another, but to desire not at all before these passions the union of bodies and carnal commerce. For what was said by Our Lord, namely: "Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3), was said of those who are still very young children and who have absolutely not experienced in themselves something of that kind, and not in general; but: "Unless you be converted, and become as little children"; that is to say: Turn away from all malice, as what was written by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians: "Brethren, do not become children in sense: but in malice be children, and in sense be perfect" (1 Corinthians 14:20). It is therefore because of this that you roll (in your mouth) again similar (words) and that you say that the spirit of fornication is born with all humanity and that children have before the other passions shameful desires to corrupt and to be corrupted, because you want to show that it is as if such a sin had been brought with our nature and had become its essence. It is thus that you have also written above concerning the demon, as you say, of the (demon) of fornication, who "by sin has acquired in relation to men a right of kinship."

And again on another shaky degree of "The Ladder", which is full of dangers and which leads onto rocks, in descending, you add these (words) which are related to those and resemble them: "Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with the old leaven — by the legal worship — nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness (1 Corinthians 5:8), that is to say by the natural and voluntary action of Adam and Cain, by which the whole formation of the mortal nature has been mixed with the

pernicious and fetid sin. (This is what you (say), you who fight the Jews in appearance: "Sin is not natural, but voluntary." What then is voluntary? Say what is the natural action of Adam and Cain which is devoid of will? How has the formation of human nature been mixed with sin? Or how have some possessed their own ark safe from the passions mixed with the formation of nature, as you have said, confusing pell-mell all these (ideas) which agree not at all with one another? For these (inclinations) sown and cast with nature, how will one chase them out? What is the affinity and the kinship of the demon of fornication? Or who strips himself of (this) kinship by the sweats of virtue? In what manner does the kinship which happens as a result of sin maintain itself? Among those who have explained, who has said: The Jews affirmed that Our Lord was possessed by a spirit of fornication? And indeed also his holiness, which (appeared) in (his) human and economy-conforming conduct, shut even the mouth of (his) enemies and (his) adversaries. The (word): "The passion of fornication is born with men, as well as the spirit which presides over it" is clearly set down in the impious writings of the Messalians. And to that resembles also this (word): "Among sins, you will call some natural and some voluntary"; and that in many places. You have written, indeed, in these terms: "The thoughts of voluptuousness have their bed in carnal men, and the ticklings of cupidity have their nest in the inconstant." And again: "Natural wickedness sets ambushes in the low thoughts of the Jews, and the impiety of Satan dwells in the haughty wills of the pagans."

Do you see that you are caught (in your nets), you who call natural every sin, and not only that which is perpetrated by the body, but already also that which is committed in thought, that one alone which you said was voluntary. Listen, indeed, to your words, unless you pretend to be deaf and at the same time persuade those who obey you to listen to you. For you said: "Natural wickedness has slipped into the low thoughts of the Jews." If therefore the wickedness of thought is natural, what then is the (wickedness) which is voluntary? Where will you have that which (belongs) to the subtle and serious division, by which you seize the occasions to call this sin natural, and that one voluntary, in order to only appear to speak of voluntary (sin) and to flatter by (this) expression those who meet you?
Indeed, when you undertake to speak of Adam in another place, using again the same division, you express yourself thus: "At the sixth hour, he was cut like a cluster of grapes by a voluntary desire; at the ninth hour, he was enclosed like wine

in the barrel of death by a natural sin." And again in another place: "And the crowds of the outer country and the (country) inner, (crowds) of nature, of thought (and) of the soul, approached him, having with them the numerous and varied crowd of voluntary illness, which he healed easily perhaps for the reason that he was sitting on the philosophical mountain of perfection."

Do you understand what you are saying, O you? Why, in fact, do you change (and) designate the crowds differently? Why can you change (and) call them with a misinterpretation? What are these (crowds) of nature? What (are) the (crowds) of the soul? What (are) the (crowds) of thought? How do the (crowds) of nature have a voluntary illness? Indeed, if you consider what is in nature, that is to say in relation to the will of the author of nature and of God who created it, (nature) also enjoys excellent health, and it has no need of healing. When you said that the whole crowd had a voluntary illness, what idea will we have of this division of the crowds of nature, of the soul and of thought? Or rather you forget — if I must tell the truth — that you put confusion in your indivisible division. Even those who have committed a natural sin according to your word — for that is the (sin) of the crowds of nature — will find themselves having a voluntary illness. Consequently you have been caught (in your own net), you who again change even voluntary sin into (sin) natural; and it is certain and manifest that it is only ironically that in | many places you name it voluntary. How do you not notice “that it is again because you have blasphemed out of ignorant impiety that you have dared to say: "It is for this that Jesus easily healed the crowd of those who were sick, because in truth he was sitting on the mountain of philosophy." For what healing did he not do easily? Which among the evangelists has ever recounted that this one was done with difficulty, and that one easily? For it is as the true God that he did them all by his will only. (Or had) need for that to climb a mountain? Do you not know that it is after descending from a mountain that he said the word (addressed) to the leper, which showed that the action of the divine will was very rapid, that it flew and that it operated: "I will, be cleansed" (Matthew 8:3; Mark 1:40; Luke 5:3). For the purification of the one who was sick equaled in speed the words themselves. Indeed, it is manifest that Jesus himself traced for us in everything the model of the philosophical life both when he withdrew apart to a place and when he prayed (cf. Luke 5:16), and that he himself did not need that to easily operate the healing of those who were sick or the other miracles.

How then, following the example of those who are drunk, do you believe you climb to the higher degrees of your "Ladder", and forget that you are heading downwards, and (that), even as you attempt again to advance and to climb staggering and you still overturn and dizziness takes you, as they say? Indeed, you have also written this: "To a man marked with the sacerdotal character, who was owing a debt of teaching oil, he gave a gift of a fifth, by remitting the non-voluntary sins: Take, indeed, he says, your bill, and write: Eighty (cf. Luke 16:7)." And to a man of the world, who was crushed by a debt of wheat which serves for nourishment, he abandoned half, by remitting two parts and a half, (namely) the (sins) non-voluntary and the (sins) natural, and a certain part of the (sins) voluntary, because of the affairs of the world, when he also said to him: Take your bill, and, sitting in the pit of despair, write: Fifty (cf. Luke 16:6)."

It would therefore be possible to cite here still many other (sayings), which would be full of many and varied blasphemies and which lead, clearly for many of them and sometimes also secretly for some of them, to the abomination of the Manicheans and the Messalians and to that other chain of the diverse heresies. I have necessarily only produced in public these (sayings), so that you may learn the reason for which he regards as a house of pleasure the wedding feast which took place at Cana of Galilee, thinking that the carnal commerce of marriage is a corruption and a natural sin, so that, even if he happens to mention the word "wedding feast" by euphemism, even if he names the sin voluntary, even if he pretends to accuse the Manicheans, he is not believed. For it is in secret that he spreads the venom according to the meanings which have been manifested by his own words and (which) have been examined previously by us. Indeed, many are accustomed, even among those who have the thoughts of Nestorius, to anathematize Nestorius, to accuse perhaps his opinions and to spread his seeds among the simple very subtly with a certain skill; it is the same thing that those also who are caught by the other heresies and are occupied with them very skillfully are accustomed to do.

That is why he did not fear to take the Virgin Mother of God as a type of the (sensation which is) voluptuous and shameless, and on the contrary the Jewish urns as an example of purity and pious thoughts, while he forgets that it is necessary to understand the waters also according to the actual quality of both persons and

things. Indeed, sometimes God promises relief and refreshment by what he says addressed to those who burn from shameful passions and the ardent darts of the Calumniator, (who) are dry and in whom there is not the moisture of the knowledge of God, crying out in the prophet Isaiah: "You who thirst, come to the waters" (Isaiah 55:1); and again in Jeremiah: "They have abandoned me, (me), the fountain of living waters, and they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns, which cannot hold water" (Jeremiah 2:13), and also in the Gospels of the same import: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink! He who believes in me, as the Book has said, rivers of living water will flow from his bosom" (John 7:37-38). Sometimes they signify the swelling which (comes) from arrogance, the overflow and moisture of a life given to passions, the violence and misfortunes of afflictions which fall upon men, as Jacob said to Reuben in the book of Creation: "Hard, arrogant, you have been insolent like water, do not boil over, for you have gone up onto your father's bed" (cf. Genesis 49:3-4 LXX), and, as the prophet David says: "Deliver me and save me from great waters and from the hand of the sons of foreigners" (Psalm 144:7), and again: "If men had risen up against us, would they have swallowed us alive? And, if their fury had been carried away against us, would the waters have submerged us?" (Psalm 124:2-4)? They also signify weakness, laziness and the unstable movement of false doctrine and the word of profane wisdom, for example of the (wisdom) Egyptian and of the (wisdom) Chaldean and of those which resemble them, like the (saying): "Your wine merchants mix wine with water" (cf. Isaiah 1:22), which was said by Isaiah to Jerusalem, and the (saying) which (was said) by Jeremiah: "What have you to do with the road of Egypt, to drink the water of Gihon? And what have you to do with the road of the Assyrians, to drink the water of the rivers?" (Jeremiah 2:18 LXX) and the (saying): "Like lying waters, in which one has no confidence" (Jeremiah 15:18).

How is it not a complete impiety to say that the first sign of our God and our Savior Christ, (namely) the water which was changed into wine in a manner worthy of God and marvelous, perverts and produces passions and madness? (This) sign is called the first. And indeed that also has been discussed, since some say that he did it first, given that, in the past time of his age according to the body, there was absolutely nothing like it, because he did not want to manifest himself before the time which was set according to the economy. Necessarily, in fact, the

Jews would be even more in doubt about him, they would not believe in him, because it is not the age which suits grown men that he would offer, “and even they would hasten quickly to seize him in advance and to nail him to the cross: however he was unseizable for them, even when they wanted to take him; that is why he is not seized, but it is of his own will that he delivered himself. It seems therefore, they say, that in all the first age, before this miracle, he did absolutely no sign, but only at the age of twelve, as Luke has recounted (Luke 2:42-47), when he sat with the doctors of the Jews who (were) in Jerusalem and he astonished them by (his) questions and by the wisdom of (his) answers. One can hear others who engage in more minute researches and who say that the evangelist said "first" this sign that he did, not in general, but at Cana of Galilee, indicating that another time and in another place he did signs, even if for all they were not the same or similar. And indeed, it is also according to the diversity of persons, times and places that these (signs) were done differently and wisely, in this manner among the Jews, who were jealous and who had thoughts of pride, because they believed they knew God and his law, and in that manner among those who were free from passions of this kind. In Egypt, in fact, when he went down there because of the folly of Herod, while he was a young child, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, he shook its (objects) made by hand of man (cf. Isaiah 19:1) — namely: the statues, the idols and the images of the demons, which made known in advance their destruction and which immediately were to be submitted to him as to the true God and fall and be vanquished also in the attack and combat with him. And she too, his mother and the Virgin Mother of God, it is as one who was accustomed to seeing signs and who knew him the author of astonishing miracles that she said: "They have no wine" (John 2:3). Thus we must think that it is the first sign, “ or (the first) of those which took place at Cana of Galilee, or the first after Jesus was baptized. Because this excellent (Romanos), who twists what is straight by the erroneous explanations he makes by means of a misinterpretation, has transformed and changed this miracle into a very wicked blasphemy, going against the purpose of the divine Book and the understanding of the doctors and initiators of the truth who have explained it by the same Spirit, it is to strengthen you, you who (are) listening (to me), that I will bring here their testimony.

Indeed, saint John, bishop of Constantinople, explaining this passage of the Gospel, wrote in these terms: "Then therefore Jesus made wine with water: and,

then and now, he does not cease to change the soft wills which flow and which spread out. There are, indeed, there are men who differ in nothing from water, who thus are cold and soft and who never stop. Those who are in this state, let us present them to Our Lord, so that he changes their will in the manner of wine, so that they no longer flow and spread out, but so that they are a subject of joy both for themselves and for others." Do you notice how great is the opposition and that the wine here is a sign of change into something better and of spiritual joy, and not of folly, as the diabolical kind of explanation of this one would have it, and that the water also is a model not of purity here and of piety, but of coldness, softness and the fact of not stopping, of flowing and spreading out.

Listen therefore to the wise and saint Cyril, who was the pastor of the great believing city of Alexandria, explain divinely this passage of the Gospel. Now he writes in these terms: "And the third day a wedding feast took place at Cana of Galilee" (John 2:1). It is therefore under a good pretext that he comes at the beginning of the signs, even if it is involuntarily that he seemed to be invited to the (feast). Indeed, while a feast was being made on the occasion of a wedding, it is absolutely certain that it is with gravity that the mother of our Savior is present and that, having been invited himself, he comes with his own disciples, to do a miracle rather than to take part in a meal, and also with that to sanctify also the beginning of human existence, we mean insofar as it had relation to the flesh. It was necessary for him, indeed, in taking human nature as a whole and making it return entirely to what is better, not only to grant a blessing to those who were already called into existence, but still to prepare in advance the grace for those who were to be born shortly after and to make holy their passage into existence. Admit still a third justification on this subject. It had been said somewhere to the woman by God: "In pain you shall bring forth children" (Genesis 3:16). How therefore was it still necessary for us 'to reject far from us this curse? Or how could we otherwise escape the condemned marriage? Because he is charitable, our Savior himself has annulled also this (curse); by his presence he honored marriage, him (who is) the gladness and joy of all, in order to chase away the first sadness of the procreation of children; indeed, if anyone (is) in Christ, he is a new creature; and: "The old things have passed away, as Paul says, and there have been new things" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Have you seen what interval there is between light and darkness? Has he called the wedding feast a house of pleasures? Is it an indication

of the corruption which (would have taken place) in paradise and of the shameful union of Adam and Eve that the one who is corrupted in his intelligence hastens to invent by virtue of a law which (comes) from himself? Let there be put also before the eyes of all the words of the doctor (which express) a sublime thought and contemplation! After what has been said, indeed, he adds again shortly after these (words) which uproot the foolishness of this (Romanos), where are found blasphemies, tales and great shame — which he has done by a misinterpretation — and which reject it from the holy places, outside the divine Book, as impure.
"The Word of God is therefore descended from heaven, as he says himself somewhere, so that, by uniting himself to the nature of man as a spouse, he might persuade it to bear in its womb the spiritual seeds of wisdom. And because of that humanity is called with just right "spouse", and our Savior "spouse", when it is from our (condition) that the divine Book develops (and) elevates the word to the sense which is above us. The feast of the wedding is gathered on the third day, that is to say in the last times of this present century; for this number "three" brings us the beginning, the middle and the end; it is thus that all time is measured. To that will appear to resemble what has been said somewhere by one of the prophets: "He will strike, and he will bandage (our wounds); he will heal us on the third day, and we will rise and we will live before him and we will know; let us set ourselves to the search for the knowledge of the Lord; it is like a dawn all ready that we will find him" (Hosea 6:1-3 LXX). Indeed, he struck because of the transgression of the commandment which (took place) in Adam, when he said: "You are dust, and you will return to dust" (Genesis 3:19). The one who was struck with corruption and death, he himself, he also bandaged (the wounds) on the third day, that is to say not in the first times, nor in the (times) intermediate, but in the last times, when, after having made himself man for us, he showed nature in good health, having resurrected it from the dead entirely in himself; that is why therefore he is also called the first fruits of those who sleep (1 Corinthians 15:20). Consequently, because (John) has said: "The third day" (John 2:1), where the wedding feast was taking place, he signifies the last time. He also makes known the place: "At Cana of Galilee" (John 2:1), indeed, he says. And let he who loves to instruct himself pay attention again! Indeed, this is not in Jerusalem that (takes place) the feast; it is outside Judea that (takes place) the banquet; it is made in the country of the Gentiles; for Galilee was part of the Gentiles (cf. Isaiah 9:1), as a prophet says. It is absolutely certain, I think, that the synagogue of the Jews has rejected the spouse

who (comes) from heaven, and that the Church which (recruits itself) from among the Gentiles has received him, and (that) very joyfully. It is not by himself that our Savior comes to the wedding feast; for he was invited. But the wine was lacking to those who were eating. Indeed, the Law brought nothing to perfection (Hebrews 7:19); the Book of Moses was not sufficient to rejoice perfectly. However even the degree of vigilance innate in us did not extend to being able to save us. It is therefore true to say of us also: "They have no wine" (John 2:3). Our God, rich in gifts, does not neglect nature agitated by the lack of goods; he showed us a wine good and better than the first; for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life (2 Corinthians 3:6). And the Law does not possess perfection in goods; but the divine instructions of evangelical doctrine bring a very rich blessing. This master of the hotel is in admiration of the wine; I believe, indeed, that each of those who are ordained for the divine priesthood and to whom is entrusted the house of our Savior Christ, is in admiration and astonishment of his word which is above the Law. It is to the (master of the hotel) first that Christ orders to give the (wine), because, according to the word of Paul, the laboring farmer must first be nourished by his fruits (2 Timothy 2:6).

After having heard that, do you still have need of my word to judge that these (explanations) are the children of the Holy Spirit, and that those of this afflicted one are the products of demons, like the examples of false little miracles which tire even at first sight those who meet them? Indeed, this doctor of the truth has said that the celestial spouse, Christ, who attaches our souls by faith in him and by union, that is to say marriage, is symbolized and figured by the wedding feast; and the minister of falsehood has said the contrary, (namely) that our Savior represented and figured as a type the man whom desires have intoxicated and the man whom passions make mad and furious, and he expresses himself by shameful words which are the very admission of his defeat: "Until now, he says, I battle, I fight and I struggle not to consent to the desire of the flesh." And after that he adds: "His mother says to the servants, to the thoughts inspired by passions: "Whatever he tells you, do it" (John 2:5). It is not possible, indeed, that he does not do what is proposed, as soon as he has tasted the first draught of thought. And however it may be that he who has received a bad thought relating to concupiscence rejects it by a chaste thought presenting itself afterwards, without coming at all to action. How therefore did you say above seeing this contemplation full of darkness: "The

disciples are pious and excellent thoughts, with which, as master of himself, he walks without obstacle in the path and good and bad." That if he is master of himself and that he advances without obstacle towards what he wants, how is it not possible that he does not (do what is proposed), after he has tasted, as you have said, the first draught? For this (word): "It is not possible", signifies (and) shows forced constraint and absence of will. Do you see that self-mastery and all the words of religion are for you only an illusory cause and come out and progress to a simple word, and that in fact you introduce forced and natural sin which you have divided, in your opinion, into (sin) natural and into (sin) voluntary, deceiving inexperienced and coarse ears. But we, we know that every sin is an illness of the soul, and is born of the will which has been gravely ill, according to the word of the divine prophet David, who sings with wisdom and with knowledge and says: "Bless, my soul, the Lord, who pardons all your iniquities, who heals all your illnesses, who saves life from perdition" (Psalm 103:1, 3-4).

Why, after having set aside all the senses which are easy to explain and which serve for the praise of the wedding feast, are you rather led to erroneous meanings? — It is because you want to show that marriage is impure, following the example of the Manicheans who are more soiled than all, of whom the Apostle, writing to Timothy, has spoken in advance thus: "The Spirit says clearly in proper terms that, in the last times, some will stray from the faith, by looking and listening attentively to seducing spirits and doctrines “of demons, because of the deceiving hypocrisy of liars, who have the conscience” L fol. 282 cauterized and forbid to marry" (1 Timothy 4:1-3). Once by spirit of contradiction you have been mad and furious in your thought, you have decreed that this good wine, this (wine) of evangelical doctrine, this (wine) perfect, is an agent of passion and folly, that this master of the hotel is the intelligence which has bent and fallen into passions, and that this spouse is the obscene thought and which desires passions, or the demon who is the companion and auxiliary of impurity: for again I use your words.

But it is a painful task to continue to report, after these (words), those which remain and which follow. Indeed, we have cited for your security! only those which regarded this explanation put before us of the word of the Gospel and the contemplation of the wedding feast which took place at Cana of Galilee and some of its many blasphemies. And otherwise, to go through everything, it is the affair of

a whole writing and of a particular and complete treatise. And I, because I hold great account of your profit, I do not consent to put before you, to (make them) heard, only these misinterpretations “ of his explanations worthy of old women and criminal, and to cause a sort of damage for your ears and also for your souls. But it is with care that I apply myself to this, to nourish you first with solid nourishment, to charm and rejoice you by the spiritual doctrine of the Fathers — for I make myself glory to report their (teachings) — and to unveil in this manner the shame of error and make you judges of what is said. And that, we will do little by little, when God grants it, although I believed that, after having heard this (which precedes), you can yourselves, by the sole reading of the very impious and very ridiculous "Ladder", recognize its shame — and it is certain that it leads by itself to the abyss — its strangeness and its privation of the divine Books. Who, indeed, would not laugh for a long time — so that, leaving aside these impieties for a time, I mention one of these (explanations) ridiculous — in seeing that the tree which (was) in paradise is measured in cubits and in hearing that their number is foolishly invented? "Indeed, he says, another wood, on which was hanged among the Perses someone by the name of Haman, was fifty cubits (Esther 7:9)." How does it not show in great number the laughs which (burst out) under the tent, the contemplation, or rather the “kōmōdia”, that is to say the ridicule, of the stater which (was) in the fish, of which Our Lord said to Peter in the Gospels: "Go to the sea, throw a hook and take the fish which will come up first; and, opening its mouth, you will find a stater; take it and give it to them" (Matthew 17:26-27). Indeed, that one, who makes many misinterpretations, who is entirely suspended from contemplation and who boasts, with pride and not with humility, of explaining the Gospel, writes in these terms: "You will find the stater of the orthodox faith of good alloy and the best: for the outer and inner man, two “hēmisia”, that is to say halves, science and action; for the spirit, the soul and the body, three “trihemisia”, faith, hope and charity; likewise also for the four temperaments, hot, dry, humid (and) cold, the four “grammata”, strength, wisdom, chastity, justice; moreover, the twenty-four “keration”, the pious thoughts of the twelve patriarchs and the beautiful true actions of the twelve apostles." Of what innkeeper, who calculates the prices of barley and straw and who at the same time moves his fingers, will it not be said, and very justly, that these are the words? Indeed, of which (word) must we laugh more than of such another? It is not easy to

find it. Of senses which are uninteresting and which suit old women, or well of rustic and coarse language and which presents great vulgarity in the words?

But please heaven that it is at laughter that stop for him sometimes such games of numbers and measures! And perhaps (Romanos) would be bearable for those who love to laugh, when it is for some other risible thing that he would be the object of laughter. “ Now he comes even to impiety, as a result of (his) misplaced and immoderate chatter. Indeed, concerning the Baptist and ambassador, and who, according to the testimony of our Savior, is greater than all those who are among the children of women (Matthew 11:11), he has dared to write in these terms: "And just as Our Lord came in the resemblance of that man who was deceived, so also he brought John (to be) the image of the Calumniator who deceived." And to this impious contemplation he attaches an empty number, similarly impious and independent, by saying that it is three times that Adam was baptized by the Calumniator, just as Christ by John. He also writes this: "And when John was baptizing every man a single time, he said: I baptize you for the satisfaction of sin, for the practice of penance, for the knowledge of truth, because, when the Calumniator placed on him his effective hand, he also said: I baptize you for the rejection of incorruptibility, for the strengthening of sin, for | opposition to salvation. When (John) baptized Our Lord three times, he said: I baptize you, you who “take away the sins of the world" (John 1:29), who give to every man immortality, who lead every man to your celestial kingdom. Are these (words) not full of all independent revolt and (all) blasphemous arrogance? Was it not then true what is said by the sacred Books: "Death goes to meet those who are not instructed" (Proverbs 24:8 LXX); and in the prophet Hosea still: "Their leaders will fall by the sword because of the lack of instruction of their tongue" (Hosea 7:16 LXX).

What book, indeed, has recounted that it is by three invocations that Adam was baptized by Satan? What Gospel has reported that it is by three immersions and (three) invocations that John baptized? From where have you taken that by raving? For this only is written: "(John) baptized for penance" (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). Who among the proven doctors has ever introduced this chatter into the churches? Indeed, the baptism which confers adoption, Christ, one of the Trinity, taught us to accomplish it in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit. And it is with these

three calls of the hypostases that agree also “in equal number the immersions, concerning which is cited still another mysterious word and attested by the divine Book”. Indeed, because, as Paul says, writing to the Romans, "we are buried with Christ by baptism, when we are baptized into his death" (Romans 6:3-4) and (because) the sepulture of Christ, after which there is the resurrection, lasted three days, it is by three immersions in the water that we show that; and, by burying the old sins in a life-giving sepulture, we change (and) we pass to the new man, receiving from there the pledge of the resurrection.

But let us go back up to the wedding feast which (took place) at Cana of Galilee, and let us conduct ourselves as is fitting to the impassible spouse. And, saying farewell from afar to the misinterpretations of this good (Romanos), which are all in water and shameful, let us run after the good wine which rejoices the heart of man (Psalm 104:15), according to the word of the Psalmist, which possesses the perfection of evangelical doctrine. And let us praise marriage insofar as it is honorable, and let us praise virginity as that which is superior and more honorable, and (let us praise) both which prepare the kingdom of heaven. And let us not forbid that one — for it is the fact of heretics to abolish and forbid marriage — and let us urge to this one, and let us follow the Apostle who writes to the Corinthians: "So that he who gives his virgin in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage does better" (1 Corinthians 7:38). And indeed, one thing is to forbid and to blame and to decry what is found in the law; and another thing is to engage to choose what is better in place of what is good and to prefer to what is permitted what is above the law. And let us regard every sin as an illness of the soul and which has for beginning a movement of | intelligence due to passions and an illness of the will, although it is by means of the body that the consummation of pleasure is made; and let us not regard that as a necessity of nature. And let us hold in horror as heretics those “ who are in these (sentiments); and, although they utter and say, by way of defense, some words which suit orthodoxy on another point, and not on that for which they are blamed and accused of having deceived themselves, let them be judged as seducers! And indeed Eutyches and Nestorius will not be absolved of the sins of which they made themselves guilty by the fact that they confess the holy consubstantial Trinity; for on that subject no one reproached them. And Novatus has not profited from the fact that he approves the profession of the Church on all other points, while he does not admit penance. For it is ridiculous

that he who is accused of having committed an adultery defends himself from having killed. And indeed it is not possible in general to find a heretic who has not said necessarily something of what is the sound (doctrine), of what the Church thinks; and it is not immediately that we count them for that among those whose thoughts are orthodox. Because Arius also professes as we also that the Father is God almighty, yet that is not sufficient to show him exempt from blasphemy against the Son. For whoever changes in part the dogmas of piety, strays from the observation of the laws and the thought of the Church, introduces seeds of heresies blamed before and, as Paul says, preaches a Gospel other than that which we have received (cf. Galatians 1:9), belongs to the party of heretics, concerning whom the same Apostle gives to the faithful a warning and a commandment, saying: "Therefore come out from among them and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord; and do not touch the unclean; and I will receive you; and I will be a father to you, and you will be to me sons and daughters, says the Lord almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). To him be glory and power also, to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 120 ON THE ENTRANCE OF THE YOUNG, AND ON THE READING WHICH IS FITTING (TAKEN) FROM THE HOLY GOSPELS, WHICH THE HOMILY INDICATES AS IT PROGRESSES, WHEN IT MAKES A MODEST COMMENTARY ON IT. TABLE OF CONTENTS

After you have heard the words of the Lord, you have recognized what the “axioma”, or the dignity, of the fast is and what its efficacy is: and the dignity, on the one hand, because God instituted it by a law as something good—that is why he also testified about it—the efficacy, on the other hand, because it puts demons to flight and (it) grants deliverance from their wicked servitude and the freedom that is fitting for prayer. Consequently, let us respect its dignity, let us experience its efficacy, and let us not push away from us the profit that will thereby be produced in us. For either, being sick, we will be healed, or, being healthy, we will gain by not falling into sickness. But let us go back, please, to the beginning of the Gospel verses, and let us consider their meaning peacefully and tranquilly according to the small strength which (is) in us; and it, it will guide us and will necessarily make us ascend to the height of the fast. A man, says (the Gospel), approached Jesus, begging him and saying: "My Lord, have pity on my son, because he is a lunatic and suffers cruelly" (Matthew 17:14). And, on the one hand, you will find that the physicians “physiologousin”, that is to say, speak according to nature, about this suffering and that they do not want to impute it to the action of demons, but (that) they say that by a certain chance the sickness is produced by a humor, which moves mainly in the head and possesses its movement because of the cycle of the light of the moon due to a certain sympathy and (which) produces in man dizziness and confusion. We, on the other hand, acquiescing to the Truth which preached the Gospel, we say that this is an attack and an aggression of demons, of those (spirits) who totally hate men and (are) savage and cruel, who hasten and apply themselves not only to harming the body, but also to spreading in the souls bad and pernicious opinions. Indeed, it is with the cycle of the moon that they circulate their own action which is extremely harmful; and they make it wax and wane with it, and (that) by skillfully diminishing it and prolonging it and increasing it, so that we think that it is the moon which is the author of evils and (that) we trace the cause back to the Creator in a blasphemous manner and (that), according to what is said by the prophet David, while we put our mouth in heaven, we utter iniquity on high (Cf. Psalm 72:8-9).

Likewise, these evil spirits gather together (and) also enter into the deception of those who are called “astrologoi”, that is to say, those who discourse on the stars, and cast horoscopes; and, while these vain and vainly proud (persons) trace their furious follies back to certain figures of malevolent stars, as they themselves say, the demons mount a severe guard and post themselves near the figure of a star, whatever it may be, and then they spread the folly through them, in order to make those who are in such dispositions be particularly seized by the deception as by that which does not err and is not mistaken. It is with this severity that they pursue (and) lead some even to certain tombs of those who are possessed by demons, in order to thereby affirm another atheistic opinion of those who think that some of the souls of the dead are changed into demons. And many among the perverse men and those who give themselves over to the practices of sorcery because of this opinion, have also thrown themselves into the murders of children; and immediately these demons expert in evils slip (and) enter under the effect of the opinion of those and personally in a deceptive manner the one who has been killed; and they are constantly near these murderers and they answer them promptly, when they call, and they enter into conversation according to what pleases (them), so that, being confirmed in the matter of deception, these thrice wretched (beings) commit themselves to still other murders and that, being caught, they incur the punishments (fixed) by the laws.

Thus the evil (demons) thirst for our ruin from everywhere because of (their) hatred of men, accomplishing everything openly and pretending in a deceptive manner and placing deceptive nets on (our) path. That is why Our Lord, in the Gospels, said concerning the Slanderer, the chief of their phalanx: "That one is a murderer from the beginning, and he does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him" (John 8:44). Because of that they spy on our follies and our thoughts which err and stray, in order to affirm (their) opinions which fight and struggle against the truth and against God. That is why we must hold to the teachings of the Church and not depart in anything from the definitions and laws of the divine Book, so that there may be in us no passage for the demons who deceive and harm, they who have also slipped into the heresies, which simulated piety, and (they) who have led many astray. For they even transform themselves into angels of light (Cf. 2 Corinthians 11:14), as Paul says, and they apply and devote their care to mixing even into the practice of the commandments their own (actions), by setting

ambushes near the path of virtues, so that the prophet David, after having considered their cunning, sings and says with the spirit rather and not with the tongue: "In this path where I walked, they have hidden nets for me, and beside the path they have set snares for me" (Cf. Psalm 140:5).

Likewise, he too, the Apostle, as it is written in the Acts, was stirred and vexed, in the presence of a servant girl, in whom there was an evil spirit, called “Python”—which is "soothsayer"—and (who) also soothsayed about him and said about those who were announcing (the Gospel) with him: "These men are servants of God, who announce to you a way of salvation" (Acts 16:17), whom he also gagged and whose mouth he shut, while she was saying true things, teaching us not to welcome demons, although they plead for the truth, but to bar every path of deception to them and to close our ears to everything (that comes) from them. Indeed, after Paul was troubled and importuned, says (the Book), turning around, he said to that spirit: "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her"; and it came out that very hour (Acts 16:18). And the (word): "He was troubled," indicates that Paul was stirred and that he awoke and rose up for a just fury. For we must above all show ourselves harsh towards them, towards the demons, when they flatter and deceive and say what (pertains) to pleasure, and that we be their adversaries and that we resist them. That is why we must also be watchful for this and flee far from those who promise to use incantations against sicknesses or against ulcers and to hang and attach to necks or arms or another member these (objects) called “phylakteria”, or amulets for protection, even if they have an appearance of piety, lest, seeking the health of the body, we become sick in addition also in the soul, when, for specious pretexts of this kind, we render (its) entrance accessible to the deception of the demons.

We must, indeed, embrace faith in Christ alone and hold to it with all (our) strength and surround it tightly on all sides. And, when in the end we are afflicted and tormented and (that) we are near death, let us lift our eyes toward heaven and, putting all our affair in faith, let us say in an assured and firm manner these words of Peter: "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you" (Matthew 26:35; Mark 14:31). And indeed, being thus disposed in (our) spirit, if, on the one hand, we are not yet near the end of our life, immediately, with a help (that will come) from on high, we will be completely healed and we will rise from the bed, while the

infirmity will flee and be driven far away, and we will enjoy all goods. If, on the other hand, we continue still to be sick, giving thanks following the example of Isaiah, let us say: "The lesson of the Lord opens my ears" (Cf. Isaiah 50:5). But, if the commandment is near and (that) we are called and (that) we must depart from life—for it is permitted and decreed by this guardian and administrator of the ineffable judgments and who conducts everything toward what is fitting for the reasons which he himself knows—let us advance on this other path with good hope, suffering no damage in our soul uselessly from deceptive men and going away with an intact confession of the faith and awaiting the true promise of the just judge, who wants to honor even what is small by what is very magnificent and (who) has promised and said: "Whoever confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who (is) in the heavens" (Matthew 10:32).

It is therefore in everything that evil demons pretend in a deceptive manner, applying and hastening to strike souls with pernicious opinions or bodies with afflictions and with wounds into which we will not fall, held as we are by a sacred anchor, by a divine hope; for neither the cycle of the moon is the author of evils, nor the impulses of the stars. Indeed, all that God has made is good, and very good (Cf. Genesis 1:31), as his God-inspired word says; and indeed, he himself, he said, and they were; he himself, he commanded, and they were created (Psalm 148:5); and according to the word of Jeremiah: "Do not evils and goods proceed from the mouth of the Most High?" (Lamentations 3:38). And no one says that the souls of men, like demons, obey the practices of sorcerers—indeed, he who speaks through the prophet Ezekiel affirms: "All souls are mine" (Ezekiel 18:4); and those which are God's, how could an impious man draw them away?—for demons alone are fond of obeying the wicked. Indeed, if the souls which have sinned must be punished on the day of judgment, because, according to the word of the wise Qohelet, "God will bring every work into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 12:14), and: "Then he will render to each one according to his works" (Matthew 16:27), according to the word of the prophet David, how will they be justly accused as having acted badly in this world, when, after (their) separation from the body, it is permitted to them to serve the wicked and to be led by them by necessity and by force? And this will show itself particularly false also concerning the souls of children, who have not sinned at all. Indeed, that "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God" (Wisdom 3:1), that is to say, in union and in familiarity with him,

as if they were cherished by him and contained in his hand, a wise man has also treated this very well in a philosophical manner. And it is according to a presumption and an opinion and a custom that was current that also that one, the father of this child, cried out: "Have pity on my son, because he is a lunatic and suffers cruelly" (Matthew 17:14). And it is according to a general opinion of men that, he himself also, the evangelist wrote earlier concerning Jesus: "And they presented to him all those who were in bad health and who were afflicted with various sicknesses and torments and who were possessed by the demon and who were lunatics" (Matthew 4:24), "and also the paralytics" (Matthew 4:24), and (that), not when he knows the suffering called "lunatic sickness" as other than what we say: "He is possessed by the demon," but—what I have said—when he made use of the custom. That is why, while his father had said here that his son is a lunatic, the evangelist, adding the healing of the suffering, did not say simply: "He healed him," so that the suffering might appear doubtful, but: "He rebuked him, and that demon came out of him" (Matthew 17:17). Thus to be a lunatic is nothing other than to be possessed by the demon.

Now, it seems, in other passages also, the evangelists have written some (accounts) according to an opinion of men, as I have said, and not according to their own thought. That is why Matthew wrote: "Jesus said to the one who was paralytic" and who was brought on a bed: "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven you." And behold, he says, "some of the scribes said among themselves"—which is: "They reflected and said in their spirit"—"This man blasphemes" (Matthew 9:2-3).

And Luke adds the cause of this with more detail: "Who can, indeed," they said, "forgive sins, if not God alone?" (Luke 5:21). And, when Jesus knew their thoughts, he said: "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say: 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say: 'Rise and walk'? But, that you may know that the Son of Man has on earth the power to forgive sins," then he said to that paralytic: "Rise, take up your bed and go to your house" (Matthew 9:4-6). And by this he clearly showed that he who has and said and did this with a power that belongs to God is true God; for it is truly the property, and (the property) of God alone to know the hidden movements of the hearts, and according to what is said by Solomon in a prayer, in the third (book) of Kings: "You alone know the heart of all men" (1 Kings 8:39), and according to what is said by the apostles in

the Acts: "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all" (Acts 1:24). And it is similarly the property of God to say also with authority: "Your sins are forgiven you" (Matthew 9:2), and to grant that in a royal manner and to confirm, by the fact that he loosened the visible paralysis, that the invisible bond of sins also has been loosened. And yet, if he were not God by essence, with this that he truly became man, he would have to distance from himself what seemed to the Jews to be a blasphemy and say: "The Father has given me this power," which sometimes he also said in other (circumstances), guiding the weakness of those who listen. But now it is in a very demonstrative way, following his wise and ineffable words, that he showed the blasphemy which seemed to those (to be such) to be truth. "For if it belongs to God alone to forgive sins, O Jews, and that I, I forgive (them), understand to what the “sunteleutikos”, or the conclusion of the reasoning, tended (namely that) I have that which is God's, I who forgive that which is such as it belongs to God to (forgive)."

And see for me the indivisibility of the economy and that he himself is one and the same (he) who speaks at once as God and as man. Indeed, after having clearly shown by this that he is true God, he did not say: "But that you may know that the Son of God has the power to forgive sins"; but he uses the word which is very humble and he says: "But, that you may know that the Son of Man has the power" (Matthew 9:6). By this it is certain and clear that false is the opinion of those who divide him by the duplication of natures which (is) after the ineffable union and (who) divide and attribute the words that belong to God to the divine nature and those that are humble and conform to the economy to the human nature. And how will someone say that what the humble one says humbly is a word of the economy? For he who speaks as it befits him has no need of the economy, and he who is very high by nature speaks conformably to the economy, when he descends to the lowliness of words, in order to confirm also by what he says that he truly became man for our salvation. Let no one therefore imagine the Emmanuel as one and another, cutting him in an impious manner after the union into the duality of natures; for he is one and the same from two (of) divinity and (of) humanity, one single person and one single hypostasis, one single incarnate nature of the Word, and who, without change or fantasy, became man perfectly.

However the evangelist, who wrote these (words) which show clearly that it was true God (he) who did everything by (his) own power and by (his own) authority, produced next a human opinion (which was) that of the crowd which stood around him and which was very far from the truth; he said, indeed: "And, having seen, the crowds were amazed, and they glorified God who had given such power to men" (Matthew 9:8). Thus it was customary for those who wrote to produce publicly also these (expressions) of the opinion of a great number, just as it is according to a general usage that Matthew made use of the expression: "Those who (were) lunatics" (Matthew 4:24), according to which he recounted that the father of this child also said of him: "Because he is a lunatic and suffers cruelly" (Matthew 17:14).

Now it seems that this father of the child is sick with unbelief and that he accuses the weakness of the disciples: "I brought him, indeed," he says, "to your disciples, and they could not heal him" (Matthew 17:16). It is because of this unbelief that according to the economy also these (cases) of healing were prevented, while the disciples had already done many (actions) of this kind and that they rejoiced and said to Jesus: "Even the demons are subject to us" (Luke 10:17). And indeed, this (man) needed a rebuke and a reproof which would correct (him). But, because the crowds also who stood all around shared the same unbelief, (Jesus) generalized the rebuke, saying: "O unbelieving and perverse generation!" (Matthew 17:17). And it is very well that he said: perverse, unveiling the kind of unbelief. And indeed, also when others who (were) possessed by the demon were healed, they said that it is by Beelzebub, the chief of the demons, that the demons came out (Cf. Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15). And now, whereas a small delay had occurred, they thought to mock (his) weakness. And (Jesus) caused such a profit to the father of the child by the rebuke that he brought next as is fitting as Lord and teacher that (that one) even cried out, saying—as Mark says:—"I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24), "The unbelief which you (have) reproached me for, receive it in place of faith, and have pity; for I recognize (my) sin." And (Jesus) inclined himself, willing that; and, after having first purified the father of his unbelief, likewise he also delivers the child from the demon. Now the disciples, after being moderately troubled and having feared that the grace of healings had abandoned them, ask a question concerning this demon: "Why could we not cast it out?" (Matthew 17:19). And, bringing them back to humility and to thinking always that they are in need,

relative to every good action, and to blaming themselves, for that the grace which (comes) from him does not arrive by itself, at any time, by some ineffable word, he answered them: "Because of your unbelief" (Matthew 17:20). And then, so that they do not think still that every action depends on faith and that they have no need of works, he adds continuing next, saying: "But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21).

Now it is well and fitting that he used a word which does not (contain) the indication of the person and that he did not say: "If you do not fast, you, you who heal, or else those who are tormented and suffer," so that the exercise of prayer and fasting might be general, both of those who heal, and of those who need healing. But he said this of those who because of (their) virtue, like the apostles, receive the power and the grace to cast out spirits. Many, indeed, for the profit of some, in places where there was no knowledge of God, accomplished such (actions) according to the need, and they depended not on their virtue, but on God who gave. Because even the soothsayer Balaam, although he was unworthy, prophesied concerning the economy, and (likewise) Caiaphas, the high priest of the Jews, however it is not because of that that Caiaphas and Balaam are prophets. That is why Our Lord also said: "Many will say to me on that day: 'Lord! Lord! did we not prophesy in your name and in your name cast out demons and in your name do many mighty works?' And then I will confess to them: 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness'" (Matthew 7:22-23). One must therefore do what is defined by the laws, and thus (it is) also with the miracles that God gives and causes to be done. Let us rejoice, and let us not become proud, and let us withdraw immediately into fear.

And what is the (word): "This kind"? Does (Jesus) speak of the demons who, in the cycles of the moon, attack men?—Not at all. Otherwise, he would say: "This species." But, when he said: "(This) kind," he speaks in a general manner of every action of the demons, relative to which we all have need of fasting and prayer. As for the fast, it is not that of foods, but it is the distancing from all evils. Indeed, if you are sick with avarice, immediately the demon who lights its fire, finding a degree to advance, advances and throws himself upon your soul. Fast therefore and subdue by hunger the desire of avarice, by not amassing for it what is dear to it and by giving of what you possess to those who (are) in need; and, by praying, you will

deliver yourself immediately from (this) folly. And if, while you count the months, you approach very harshly those who owe (you), by demanding heavy and execrable interest, you differ in nothing from the demon who, in the cycle of the moon, tears the man to pieces. And if someone is driven and importuned also by an unreasoning and brutal anger, let him fast from that by gentleness and let him not forget that it is the demon, who makes the passion grow, that he brings before himself and that he welcomes. Let the envious one also appropriate this remedy and let him not be envious of the goods of his neighbors; otherwise, he will find that the serpent which crawls has slipped secretly into the chambers of his heart, he who was envious of Adam because of the blessed dwelling in paradise, he who out of jealousy armed against Abel the right hand of his brother. (Let them appropriate) this, the adulterer and he who is in the service of his belly and gluttony, (who are) tax collectors and receivers who are not sated. Indeed, it is of this and of all evils in general that the demons light the fury. But "this kind," that is to say every species which welcomes the action of demons, is cast out by fasting and prayer. It is with this purification that Christ, our Passover, who has been sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7), wants us to meet him on the day of the resurrection. That, along with what has been said, also the (fact) for us of not partaking of food is a purification of sins, God himself has attested (it), who named the tenth day of the seventh month alone the day of atonement, where he commanded to fast in the Law which was given by Moses (Cf. Leviticus 23:27). Who therefore is he who does not want by this remedy to render God propitious for his sins? Consequently, let us fast joyfully and even without any motive, in order to receive a remission of our sins abundant and rich and to obtain the kingdom of the heavens by the grace and by the charity of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, with whom praise befits the Father with his Spirit, holy in all and good and who is consubstantial with him, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 121 ON THE PREPARATION AND DISPOSITION FOR ENTERING THE BAPTISTERY, ACCORDING TO CUSTOM. TABLE OF CONTENTS

After having spoken to you once and twice concerning this evening and (having said) what is the sense and the meaning of the (fact) that, during these forty holy days of fasting, we forbid the entry, which (takes) place with prayers, to the source that flows continually and which from heaven (is) a stream that (goes) to the Jordan, until the day of the resurrection, more adorable and (more) glorious than all days, I deem it again superfluous to stir (my) tongue, always and again next year, on the same evening and concerning the same subject, considering also at the same time that the poverty of (my) word cannot bring something new on objects that are similar. And, in making these reflections, I believe I have thought well.
Now, when the following year of the cycle brings me again to the same evening, I do not know how I find myself changed and (how), in considering you in my spirit, I appear from indigent (to be) someone opulent and generous. And, like that widow, who received Elijah, who was poor and became rich, when I consider my need and that I cannot nourish copiously the praiseworthy insatiability of your ears, nor set before you in any quantity whatsoever a single whole bread, I judge it good to use her words and to say to each of those who dispose themselves to hear: "The Lord your God lives, I do not have a bread baked under the ashes, except about a handful of flour in a jar, and a little oil in a jug" (1 Kings 17:12), so that you yourselves may answer to those and (that) you may oppose to them with (loud) cries the prophetic words of Elijah: "The Lord says this: The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not diminish" (1 Kings 17:14). That is the abundance of my goods, that is my opulence, that is the wealth of (my) word; for the (fact) that you yourselves have such dispositions of faith confers upon me a gift of speaking which (is) very sufficient.

However, I will continue, since we have made mention of the oil, to take that as a subject, in order to weave for you an exhortation suitable for this evening. Let us therefore think of those ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), whom the Gospel presents, who were preparing to go to meet the bridegroom; and let us imitate those five wise ones, but let us flee the example of those five foolish and senseless ones; and, during these holy days of fasting, let us furnish and prepare our lamps. For, on the

one hand, the soul of each of the faithful is a virgin, when it recognizes Christ as the only bridegroom and husband, as Paul says, writing to the Corinthians: "I betrothed you to one husband, to present you to Christ as a pure virgin" (2 Corinthians 11:2). On the other hand (it is) a lamp, a wick, which is braided by the labors of actions and by the assiduous meditation of the divine law of virtues and (which) shines with the light of the fire from above and from the heavens.

For, let no one therefore think that it is only of those who have renounced the commerce of marriage and have run after isolation and the solitary life, and after the purity which (is found) in that, and after the (condition) of becoming beforehand dead in all that belongs to procreation and of being crucified with Christ, that the Gospel speaks here. For it speaks, as I have said, of every soul, which by the bath of regeneration has been married and has attached itself to Christ, because it is necessarily required that the lamp have the preparation of the virtues which the light that (comes) from above illuminates, so that, when (Christ) descends from heaven a second time with a glory that is fitting to God and (is) sublime and above which nothing can be imagined, while the angels will come before him with the trumpet and a great voice (Matthew 24:31), each (soul) may present to him the lamp of its own works, which is imbued with mercy for the poor — which (mercy) has been beforehand prepared and put in place — and (which is) shining, and which raises its flame very high, and (which) by its brightness and splendor attracts the face of the bridegroom filled with peace and joy, in order to enter with him also into the bridal chamber. For, indeed, the joy of the kingdom of heaven has been likened to the bridal chamber (cf. Matthew 22:2), because to the brightness and (to) the union is mixed the true and chaste pleasure and which is not moderated by satiety and of which one cannot find an example on earth; for there is among men nothing more loved and dearer than the carnal union which (takes place) in marriage, from which also love for children is born. And indeed, if it were possible to find another image which is greater, (the Gospel) would necessarily bring that one; but it has used that one, because another cannot show at the same time those (resemblances) which are very numerous.

Therefore the prophet Isaiah says to Jerusalem, which is the Church: "As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall the Lord rejoice over you" (Isaiah 62:5). And that it is to the Church that the word is addressed, and not to the

Jerusalem which is seen with sensible eyes and (is) ancient, he (has) predicted it: "And he will call your new name, which the Lord will name" (Isaiah 62:2). Now the new name is that of the Church, and that which completes it, (namely) that of the Christians. And that the Lord has called the (name) and (that) among men no one has found it, he (has) made it known first, when he said: "You are rock, and on this rock I will build my Church" (Matthew 16:18). And it is in the same manner that Paul also, after having used the comparison and the resemblance of the commerce of marriage, in writing to the Ephesians, says: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:31-32). For, (the mystery) is truly great even in the example of the love which pertains to the yoke of marriage; but it is greater — one cannot even say what it is — and it regards the mystery, when it is elevated in relation to Christ and in relation to the Church.

Because therefore we have understood what it means to go to meet Christ and what (is) the significance of the lamps, we too, let us dispose ourselves and prepare ourselves to enter with him into the house of light on the day of the passion of the Savior and of the resurrection, when he is going through the divine bath to attach still other virgins, souls, when they will gather together and bind themselves to the only virgin and bride, the Church. For, although many are added, she is still similarly one, perfect and in whom there is nothing lacking absolutely in what concerns the appellation of him who has called. That is why it is in ten virgins also that (Christ) has enclosed his fullness; for the number "ten" is the mark of perfection; but that five of them were found foolish and incur the condemnation of the last folly, that is the (fact) of their fault; and that also shows that (there are) many called, but few chosen (Matthew 22:14). And one can find from here another deeper significance. For, because the practice of the virtues is governed by these five senses, by sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, when they obey the intelligence, the chief of the spirit, when it commands with the divine law what must be done, and (when) they conform to what is fitting, the word shows that, if in the face of this patience they have in balance also the good offices and the mercy for those who are in need, it is double in a way, and ten instead of five, that they appear to the bridegroom. But, when they lack that and (when) they have not practiced carefully pity towards (their) fellow men, it is with good reason that they are

judged to be (the subjects) of a lack of intelligence, (they) who have taken upon themselves uselessly the pain which (is encountered) in those other (actions), and they are counted only five, being reputed for nothing; and they have lamps for the patience that remains, but (lamps) dry, and which cannot without being extinguished shine with the light that (comes) from above, which says: "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13, 12:7).

We must therefore also braid the wick by braiding the virtues, as I have said, and imbibe it with abundant oil, and disdain no one, and prepare ourselves to go to meet (all) together. For, the brightness which (is produced) by the purity of good works excites the light that (comes) from above; for what is similar runs towards what is similar. And listen to one of the prophets — and Hosea is that one — who traces for you the preparation of the lamp: "Sow for yourselves righteousness, and reap the fruit of life; light for yourselves the light of knowledge; while it is time, seek the Lord, until fruits of righteousness come to you" (Hosea 10:12 LXX). In doing this, we will be virgins, young maidens, worthy to go to meet Christ. For, the word calls the same souls often either virgins or young maidens, when they have shown juvenility, that is to say, eagerness, in the face of dishonorable passions. Then also the word of the teaching concerning food, when it is likened to wheat and wine, will appear of agreeable odor in what concerns your actions. For, according to the word of the prophet Zechariah, the wheat (is) for the young men, and the wine of agreeable odor for the virgins (Zechariah 9:17 LXX). For it is for the sake of virginity and for the sake of the observance of a pure life and of the marriage (marked) by the seal of Christ that we have been married; and it is by the juvenility and eagerness of the labors of the virtues that the intellectual wheat and the wine — for that is the meaning of the teaching — are known, and (that) they make the neighbors participate also because of the agreeable odor and they bring others to the zeal of what is similar, and (that), as Paul says, a sacrifice and an oblation are offered in agreeable odor to the living God (cf. Ephesians 5:2), to whom (be) the praise for the ages. So be it.

## HOMILY 122 EXHORTATION CONCERNING THE HABITUAL GIFT OF PIECES OF CLOTH FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM LEPROSY OR ARE OTHERWISE ILL. TABLE OF CONTENTS

I remember having exhorted you, also in the past time, to bring—not with a stingy heart—fragments of pieces of cloth for the necessary service of those who suffer from an illness, to the point that I myself set before you, to interpret it, also the entire parable which is in the Gospel, of the man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and to explain the meaning of that one according to my small measure, while, after having been also drawn along by your ears, as you thought, you seemed to surpass yourselves in a certain way in generosity and in largeness concerning the gift of the pieces (of cloth) which was spoken of. For, because in sum an exhortation and a warning were necessary for this, I am not ashamed to call "generosity" and "largeness" this little value and (this) little importance (of the offering). When therefore you appeared then, on that day, as eager and generous people for (this) gift, you did not appear the same also in the year that followed, but in great number (you were) small. And why do I say "small," when you only pretended in a deceitful manner to act according to the law, or rather, if I must say what is truer, when you yielded even in habit to poor women and to vile and small men, to the point that these, doing violence to their indigence out of love for God, accomplish what was habitual and appropriate for themselves the crown of that widow, whose whole way of life consisted in two obols, and (who) nevertheless gave everything to Christ, when she voluntarily enlarged the narrowness of her goods and (showed that) those two obols (were) a great wealth, so that He who looks at the hearts and does not consider what is given, but from whom is what is given, and weighs the fullness of the thought, decrees and says: "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are putting into the treasury" (Mark 12:43; Luke 21:3). It is necessary therefore to say, to those who are sick with narrowness and smallness of soul in this respect, what was said by Paul to the Corinthians: "Widen yourselves also, and do not narrow yourselves in your inward parts" (2 Corinthians 6:12-13).

For why do we have such miserable dispositions and are we stingy even for pieces of cloth? Why?—Because we do not do divine things with understanding, but (that) we see everything with fleshly eyes, and with the spirit, absolutely nothing.

For, do not have regard to the little value of what is given, and consider rather the magnificence of the motive, that is, the intention, for which it is given. And search with love of knowledge why, once in these days, the first of the deacons ascends into the sacred pulpit, and cries out in a public proclamation proper to the assembly, and reminds the assembly to bring this gift and to give pieces of cloth and pieces (of linen) for those who are corrupted by the disease of elephantiasis, or suffer from leprosy, or are afflicted and sick with other ulcers.

And indeed, it is not simply that this time is assigned to this small and yet pious and more pious than others gift, as I judge. And indeed, near and at the doors is a feast of the Savior, that of Easter, where is the remembrance of the voluntary and divine passion. Because it was necessary for God to suffer to shut before us, by the entire impassibility, the source of sufferings, which has flowed without remission—which is the Slanderer—the Son and Word, who is before the ages, truly took the flesh which is from us; and, when without change He was hypostatically united to it which has an intellectual soul, and without division He was one of two, namely of the divinity and of the humanity, He made for Himself, as incarnate, accessible and practicable the passage which leads to death, He who also, after having struggled with it in the flesh capable of suffering, and died as man and the same remained immortal and impassible as God, when He conquered death for us and not for Himself, and He tasted that, not in what He was, but in what He became. For, because we were those who were conquered in Adam and we were under the net of death, after having become incarnate in all that is ours and having taken all of us into Himself and having left aside nothing of that by which the passage to sin took place, He engaged the combat and struggled with all death, in order to uproot it, when He was the firstfruits of the resurrection for the whole human race. And Paul proclaims this with a loud voice, writing to the Corinthians and expressing himself thus: “For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

Therefore He ascends onto the cross, making known that His descent to Sheol which takes place through suffering is an ascent rather than a descent. For, He made us ascend with Him, we who were lying down there below, and He rises to the depth of humiliation, calling again death, I mean our fall, by (His) height and

showing that, even when He descended to that, He is high by essence, because, when He was brought low because of the economy, He was in no way drawn down (away) from the dwelling which is on high and which is above all. And He is stretched out straight, drawing us toward the ascent and the ascension of virtue, we who have gone into obliquity through sin, and setting us upright upward and leading us toward progress and toward development. And it is not that only; but further, when He remained on high on the wood, He submits to many wounds, voluntarily accepting by a word and by wisdom the gush which comes from the wound; for He is wounded, in order to bandage and heal my incurable wounds. And He tastes gall and vinegar contrary to Adam's gluttonous taste. And He is nailed by His hands, healing the extension and retraction of that one's hands, with which he touched the fruit beautiful and not beautiful, and beautiful because of joy and gladness, and not beautiful, because (Adam and Eve) ate from it untimely and not at the time that a commandment should fix, and they await the fixing of that and they do not look, with audacity and according to a law which comes from themselves, as opportune what is not in its time. But the feet also are attached with nails, so that they are capable of putting a curb on us to stop the race which leads to sin, moderating the descent and the fall of the violent movement which leads to voluptuousness, which, like a disease, has acquired a passage as a result of Adam's will which was conquered, which gave cause again for the condemnation to death. And—what comes last and is by far the most important—after He separated the soul from the body and His spirit went out and He died the voluntary death to which we have been condemned, He is wounded by the lance in His side, which was dead from a human point of view—for (Jesus) was already without soul and without breath—and which lived the divine life because of the union of the divinity. And, when He was wounded, He emitted from there blood and water, so that, just as what came out of the side of the first Adam—which was the woman—brought us death through the deception of the serpent, so the water and the blood which gushed from the side of the second Adam, they which are capable of purifying our sin, generate life and salvation; for it is by water and blood that the beginning of regeneration and of society with God takes place.

It is therefore through all our (states) that the Emmanuel came, when He is one of two without change and without confusion and He also makes the impious division of the duality of natures which comes after the union and the atheistic appearance,

so that our salvation may be attributed neither to a man who is separate, nor to imaginary hallucinations, but to God, who truly became man and died a unique death and that one multiform and which happened to Him according to the economy through many reproaches and torments, in order to put on each of our ulcers an appropriate and suitable bandage.

The prophet Isaiah, foreseeing this clearly and with his own eyes and taking up from on high the audacity, which fights with God, of the Jews, his compatriots, cried out: “He Himself bears our sins, and it is because of us that He is afflicted with pain; and we judged that He is in pain and in wound and in torment. He Himself was wounded because of our iniquities, and He was sick because of our sins; the chastisement of our peace is upon Him; by His bruise we were healed” (Isaiah 53:4-5). When the prophet appropriated to himself the audacity and outrage of his people, which were to take place toward the Savior and God Jesus, and counted himself among the oppressors, “we ourselves,” he says, “(His) enemies and (His) adversaries, we who have wounded, we who have torn, we who have maltreated, it is by the illnesses, by the wounds, by the bruises of Him who was sick, of Him who was wounded, of Him who was struck, that we were healed, so that, with such a great salvation of His, His sufferings may be for us also a doctrine of peace.” For who would not have peaceful and friendly dispositions even toward an enemy and an adversary and exchange concord for enmity which lends itself well to the absence of peace, thinking that God suffered in the flesh for those who are more than all enemies and difficult to pacify and that He endured gently all that for which we were those who are worthy of the ultimate wrath? This therefore is what the prophet said: “The chastisement of our peace is upon Him” (Isaiah 53:5); “it is upon Him, as upon a column,” he said, “that the teaching of our peace is written.” And immediately he puts the motive accordingly, and he says: “Because it is by His bruise that we were healed” (Isaiah 53:5). Now the (word): “We,” has a numerous signification; (it is) we who crucified, we who fought in every way, we who outraged and despised without mercy. Therefore, He also cried out in the Gospels, proposing His own example for teaching: “Learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29). Paul also writes what agrees with Him, saying: “For He Himself is our peace” (Ephesians 2:14).

Of these salutary sufferings, of these healing wounds, of the sickness that heals and produces strength and health, there is mention shortly in the adorable feast of Easter. Therefore it is also in that time that we exhort you to bring help for our wounded brothers, and that even with only pieces of cloth. As for you, when you have regard to the little value of the gift, as I said previously, do not forget the motive worthy of God and the reality; do not have regard to such and such a one, as to him who is corrupted by leprosy and is full of ulcers and is lying on the ground, and have neither repugnance nor disgust. But, while you see that one below with the eyes of the body, look upward with the eyes of the spirit toward Him, about whom you have clearly heard Isaiah prophesy: "And He Himself was wounded because of our iniquities, and He was sick because of our sins" (Isaiah 53:5). You honor these wounds, by which you were redeemed from sin; you offer for the sacrifice this blood, which submerged your iniquity; you heal these wounds, by which you were healed, when you were wounded by sin; these (wounds were) incurable, and behold you were already struck by death.

Consider to whom you render honor, given who you are. For if a king descended to your house, after having undergone the risk for the whole charge of his army and having had successes and having triumphed and having raised the standard of victory against his enemies, and he had an apparent wound as a result of his engagement and his melee with (his) adversaries, and not on his back like a fugitive (do I say), searching carefully everything in your house and seeking even everything that is found hidden and examining what is most precious among all your linens, would you not bring it and tear it before his eyes, so that he sees your eagerness and your generosity and you double for yourself the object of the service, when the spirit is served rather than the wound, because he sees you being without mercy for everything, while you are preoccupied with only one thing, the relief of this? Who therefore, tell me? Is Christ not a triumphing one who presents Himself in a combat? Is He not, when He fought your combat against the Slanderer and against the troop that hates men and against the phalanx of demons which is worse than all? Is He not, when He won for you the victory over death? Hear the armies which are on high sing to Him a song of victory, when, after the resurrection from the dead, He ascended to the heavens, to Him who filled (all) as God and when He was on the earth and when He descended into the abysses of Sheol: "Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in

battle" (Psalm 24:8). Make Him therefore participate in this honor, to which you would also make participate one of the kings who are on the earth or (one of the) generals. Consider how great is the distance between Him and those, and tremble because of the difference which is above all greatness; and do not receive with very torn and dirty and utterly useless pieces of cloth the King of kings, the Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15), the God who is above all (Romans 9:5), He who did not reject to descend even to this, (namely) to have the pleasure of receiving compassion from you, even in what is very small and to bring you in return for that such help and to give you at a low price the kingdom of the heavens.

We hear the holy Gospels recount that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus and a small number of women with them honored the body of our Savior with myrrh and with aloes and with a shroud and with sweet spices, at the time of the burial, and we esteem these persons thrice happy, because they obtained to serve the venerable body. And someone perhaps says: "Would that I had been in those times, so that I too might touch the holy body and participate in its burial or in some other service!" For it is customary for men to proclaim happy what is past and to despise what is in their power and to count that as if it is nothing and to neglect it. But you still have now, O man, the power to embrace also the body of Christ, which is more magnificent than to touch it and to serve it. For the ulcer of this brother, who is lying on the square, for whom you frequently have repugnance and whose sight you cannot even bear—but you pass by running and you even say that you yourself have disgust and nausea, rising into the air and forgetting your mud and swelling with pride—belongs to the body of that One, first, because Christ is the head of all who have believed, who constitute the Church (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and secondly, because He said clearly that He Himself is fed through those who are hungry and that He is served through those who are sick: "Truly, I say to you," He says, "whatever you did for one of the least of these my brothers, you did for Me" (Matthew 25:40).

Yourself therefore, apart from yourself, examine the reality, and, by the example of the reality which is proposed for examination, imagine that you find yourself very sick in your body. And, among your friends, many bring everything that regards your relief and your healing; and this one goes to the doctors; and that one, when you go to the bath, goes with you; another leads you and carries you in his hands,

and he lays you on the bed; and another sleeps at your house even during the night, and he presents to you food and drink and if there is need of something else; and, to put it simply, they share with one another the care of your illness. Now there is only one who does nothing of all that; but, after your demise, he will eagerly give the garments and clothes (destined) for the burial of your body and the other (objects), by which, it seems, the funerary consolation of those who have departed is honored. To whom therefore especially do you owe thanks? To those who, when you were alive and noticing, served you and strove to bring you back to health, or to him who honored your friendship by the honor of the burial? It is quite evident that it is rather to those—and that stands far at a great distance—than to this one. Such are also those who see Christ in our brothers, living and sick, and neglect them and pass by running and are gaping concerning the ancient (facts) and say: "Would that I had been then, so that I might have part with Joseph of Arimathea and with the others in the eagerness that they brought to the burial and to wrap and bury the divine body and to participate by that touch in the sanctification and blessing." It is permitted to you, indeed, still now, to touch Him in many ways, and not in one only; for, to whatever good action you go, you will necessarily find that He is the first to meet you. You see Him who is before you on the altar, just as He is seated on the heavenly throne; you approach and from there you receive Him and you clasp Him in your hands and you embrace Him and you cover Him with kisses and you present Him to your mouth and you make Him enter within you and you have Him entirely in you, in your house. And, if you go into a prison and visit him who is in bonds, you will find Him there also entirely bound, entirely lying on a bed with a sick person, entirely full of ulcers with that wounded and leprous one, entirely stretching out His hand with him who is hungry, entirely burning with thirst with him who is thirsty, because He takes upon Himself the need of all and appears entirely near each one.

Why therefore, neglecting Him when He is in need, do you want to honor Him by that which He does not need, and do you elevate yourself toward what happened formerly? For, when He voluntarily endured the cross for us and separated His body from His soul, so that, by dying our death, He might plant by that seeds of life and resurrection, while He is full as God and Word and cannot be divided, He was united entirely to the soul hypostatically and through it He pillaged Sheol, cutting the bonds of there; similarly and not otherwise, but hypostatically, He was

united entirely to the body also. And it is according to the economy, and not by need, that He was placed in the tomb, suspending the corruption which occurs in the tombs and offering in advance to the bodies that return to the earth and disintegrate the firstfruits of the resurrection and spreading in them the strength which relates to that. Then, even if He was without need, the honor which is in the cares of the burial was necessary for those who lived then, and not so that now, we ourselves, desire that in vain. For He did not need the shroud and the last wrapping of the burial, He whose face shone like the sun and whose garments became white as light (Matthew 17:2), when, after being transfigured on the mountain, He showed to His disciples a little of His own glory. But it is according to the economy—what I have said—that He submitted to the burial and for the cause that has been said and to show by all that that His body was of our essence and to set aside and chase away from everywhere the opinion of imagination. Therefore He is also wrapped in a shroud and He submits to a mixture of myrrh and He is placed in a tomb and He is found under seals and under guards, when He was gathering for the resurrection what is true and foreign to all imagination and He was preparing and disposing it in advance and confirming it by the very facts. If, indeed, even when all this took place, nothing makes blush and covers with confusion those who promote imagination, to what folly would they not fall, if the body of Our Lord had not been delivered to burial?

Let us honor Him therefore by all that is fitting and agrees with the needs and with the circumstances. Then it was the time of the burial; and those who were eager for that buried, and from a profitable harvest they gathered a profit. Now he who is full of ulcers asks for a remedy; let us seize this opportunity with joy, and apply ourselves to outdo one another. And let us not give only a piece of cloth, but also the whole garment, for those who suffer and are sick, because we are well and those are tormented by ulcers. To those who suffer and are cruelly afflicted with pain, let us pay a just tribute. Let us associate ourselves, indeed, with them in their suffering, by bringing them some relief and some consolation. For often some among them receive evils in this world, like Lazarus, for their sins and they are purified by affliction and pain; and they will be carried into the bosom of Abraham and into the dwelling of the just and they will recognize those who did good to them and they will receive them with joy. Let him who is well today remember that what belongs to tomorrow is unknown; for sufferings are general, and the future is

invisible. Let no one disdain and despise and count as nothing the ulcers of his neighbor, and he will not experience ulcers. For “before the eyes of God are the ways of man” (Proverbs 5:21), says the Sacred Book; and, when He sees that you are benevolent and that you bend toward the suffering of your brother, He chases from your body every cause that produces illness and the corruption which comes from elephantiasis (?) and from leprosy and from scabies and from other ulcers. Quickly therefore leave your cloak, and throw it on him who is sick, knowing that with it you also leave the tunic of ulcers.

Take care, women, all you who have pity—and indeed, your sex is particularly disposed to pity—that each of you throw for herself one of her own linens, and for her husband likewise one of his garments, and for the children similarly. For each, what is given is salvation, a debt that heals and that helps. Sow abundantly on the body that is sick, so that you may harvest sheaves of health that are extremely rich.“What then?” will say one of the men who are present. “Do you want me to leave (my garments) immediately? And thus you frighten me and pursue me.”—But above all, on one side, if, withdrawing a little time, you do this, you will appear very ardent in faith and you will push others to a similar zeal, and there will be for you also a reward because of that. If, on the other side, going to your house, you want to do this tomorrow or even something more important, one day late you will cause no harm; only do not forget what has been said. If therefore you leave (your garments) immediately, as it is possible for you, you will resemble those who saw Christ seated on the colt of a donkey and left their cloaks and spread them on the road. It is necessary therefore that, both for health and for all help, we give in exchange something to God who is helpful and benefactor. For when Moses armed himself and went to war against Midian, once the combatants returned, after they had conquered those enemies and among them not a single one had fallen in combat, but all were saved, because of such salvation, when they decided by common agreement in place of the whole army of soldiers, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds said to him: “Your servants have counted the combatants who are from among us, and not one is missing. And we have made an offering to the Lord, each giving the gold object he found, necklace and chain and ring and bracelet and hair ornament, to make atonement for ourselves before the Lord” (Numbers 31:48-50). In the same manner therefore it is fitting for each of you, chief and master of his house, to make offerings for the

health and salvation of all who dwell there and to render the Lord benevolent, so that He may be propitious to him. For what we have said concerning pieces of cloth, we must also apply to very magnificent good works according to the measure of the resources of each and according to the need of the needy, because Our Lord also said that a cup of cold water that is given brings a reward to him who gives it (Matthew 10:42; Mark 9:41); but then necessarily when it is given to him who does not possess even that, in some place without water or because of the lack of water. And indeed, if here someone, giving to the needy cups of water taken from the stream that flows abundantly from Daphne for us, believes he fulfills the commandment of the Gospel, he will be ridiculed, because he gives in a superfluous and useless manner a drink that is abundantly spread, and let him not believe that he fulfills the spirit of the law. And may our Lord and our God Jesus-Christ, this legislator of the laws of life, give us both the understanding to comprehend and the strength to do what He has commanded, and may He render us worthy of the kingdom of the heavens! May it happen that we all obtain it for the glory and for the praise of His name, now and always and unto the ages of ages! Amen!

**HOMILY 123 CATECHETICAL HOMILY, WHICH TAKES AS ITS SUBJECT AND MATTER THE CONFESSION OF THE ORTHODOX FAITH; BUT IT ESPECIALLY TOUCHES ON THE ABOMINABLE IMPIETY OF THE MANICHEANS AND IN ADVANCE WARNS SO THAT NO ONE FALLS INTO THE NETS OF THESE, BECAUSE SOME HAD EVEN EXPERIENCED SUCH A PERNICIOUS ERROR.** **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

While I am about to touch upon the catechetical homily, I want, on the one hand, and with a care that is very diligent for me, reflecting on the literal word as is fitting, to touch only upon buzzings and to hold myself (to them), and to buzz those softly and very humbly and as if I were speaking quietly, and not to assail with words theology, to which the confession of the faith urges me to come in any way, so as not to forget, when the ears that are beginning and are not initiated or that, in other words, are ignorant and untrained in such (matters) are ringing, that I completely stop them up and (that) I (them) close by that which I cry out more, or (that) I open them by that which I buzz there little by little softly, to the extent that they have the faculty and the power to hear. I know, on the other hand, I know clearly that, if I only turn the eye of my spirit toward a thought of the divine glory, and (that) it sees some of the invisible things that fall under our understanding, and (that) I begin to meditate on this a little, I will rise up and I will ascend immediately and I will be rapt, and it is up to a mountain of high thoughts that necessarily Jesus, The Word of God, this One of the holy Trinity, this door of knowledge, who leads carefully up to the deep and yet comprehensible contemplations and led out with more care (preventing) the teaching of (matters) which must not be touched, will make me ascend. And that is why he says: "I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved and he will enter and go out and he will find pasture" (John 10:9). It is for this in truth that he is even descended to us by the mode of the most charitable inhumanation, when, so to speak, he also prostrated himself at the feet of our spirit which walks on the earth. (namely) so that the entrance might become practicable for those who cannot advance and enter. Besides the door therefore, he named himself also the way, employing and harmonizing the names with the difference of senses and thoughts, and he says: "I am the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father, except through me" (John 14:6).

If therefore I walk by the way, if I pass through the door, it is also up to a mountain, even without willing it, that I will rise up. And indeed, (Jesus) loves to make ascend not only those who (are) like Peter and James and John, but also those who (are) very small and (very) humble, according to the measure of the strength of each of them. However all (his) action (takes place) in a charitable manner, and not because, we ourselves, we are near, but because, he, (he is) near for those who are not distant in every thing; for, "I am, I, a God who (is) near, says (the Lord), and not a God who (is) far off" (Jer. 23:23 LXX). And, if I ascend, he will also transfigure himself, perhaps, before me, as it is written in the Gospels (cf. Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:1). For it is no longer, as the way or the door which lead, and as if they made thoughts enter, that he will reveal and (that he will reveal) what is adapted to the ears of those who are being catechized; but it is from what is near that he will (them) lead and (them) bring toward what is higher. And that is this transfiguration (namely) the ascent and the gradual advance of the thoughts. And his face also will shine like the sun, and his garments will become white as the light (cf. Matt. 17:2). For it is by the glory which surrounds him and by what is seen on him externally that God is known, as well as by bright garments, and not by a consideration and (by) an interior and hidden reflection; (he is known) for example by the beauty and the greatness of the creatures, by the order and by the harmony which is seen in them, so that we may say like the prophet David: "How magnificent (are) your works, Lord! (30) all, you have made them with wisdom" (Ps. 103:24), and by what, he has said, he, to his own servants, and not because we will scrutinize those ineffable things and (that) we will seek what he is in essence who (is) above all.

After that, it is fitting that Moses and Elijah will come and appear, when Moses represents the Law, and Elijah the prophets, who confirm by what they have predicted the great mystery of this piety (1 Tim. 3:16) which (is) in Christ. But they also spoke with Jesus, showing the capital agreement of the Old Testament and the New, of the shadow and the truth, of the letter and the spirit, of the figures and of what (is) figured, of the signs and of what (is) known, of the prediction and of what must happen and of the outcome (cf. Luke 9:31) of the facts. For that is what the Law and the prophets will say together with Jesus through the intermediary of Moses and Elijah.

And, when I stand on the mountain, if I strive to remain in these (thoughts) with more search and that I imagine myself to sit and to fix myself and to dwell in what is seen and to say: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; do you wish that we make here three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah?" (Matt. 17:4; cf. Mark 9:4; Luke 9:33) — it is to the same tents, in fact, that the Law and the choir of the prophets lead, when they rise up to the Gospel and that by it they are gathered together in a chapter spiritually, so that they are counted three and that they result in one single “ouvrégacaux”, that is to say one single conclusion of the reasoning — a luminous cloud will then hide and interrupt my superfluous search, because, even in interrupting, it both enlightens and hides at the same time. And indeed, it is not with jealousy that (Jesus) does this, but rather with pity; for his aim is not to (us) impose a burden by what is above (our) strength, but to (us) enlighten by what can be grasped by us who are bound with the flesh and to intercept the rest, so that it does not obscure and (that) it does not submerge, by an abundance and by an exaggerated largesse, even what we can see.

What therefore will I hear from the cloud, which both enlightens and interrupts profitably? — A voice, which is perfect and which is reported as in the name of the Father: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17:5). In receiving this voice which has descended from the hidden sanctuary from above — and that one, I cannot bear it either — I, it is on myself that I will look and that I will bring back (my) gaze downward. And indeed, "when they heard, says (the Gospel), the disciples fell on their faces; and they were very afraid" (Matt. 17:6). I will also need that Jesus approach me on the mountain and (that) he touch me and (that) he make me rise and that he command me to have confidence and to not be afraid. For it is written: "When Jesus approached them, he touched them and he said to them: Rise up and do not be afraid" (Matt. 17:7).

And thus, receiving a slight buzzing and a noise in my ears, I will be initiated by the voice which has been heard and I will initiate to believe in one God the Father almighty and in one Lord Jesus-Christ, only-begotten Son and consubstantial with the Father. For, if the Father said: "This is my Son" (Matt. 17:5), I have the whole reality of theology which shines with a small number of words and (which) expands with it, because the word is also simple and it easily brings the infidel to

(give his) agreement. For one must say thus: "If he is Son (he is) truly begotten; and, if he is, (he) is not at all created." And indeed, "He is my Son, he said, and not: "He became (my Son)." But, if it were said: "He became", he who became would be placed, as is fitting, in the number of the (beings) created. Consequently he who is Son and did not become (it) will be ranked with him who is Father and did not become (it), because he is superior to all those who have come into existence. For, just as that one is perpetually Father, he who did not begin to be Father and does not cease (to be), so also this one is perpetually Son, not permitting the true name of Father to ever be empty of a true Son and to be deprived of a true and authentic generation. For (the Son) is "the brightness of his glory and the image of the hypostasis" (Heb. 1:2) of the Father, and for no reason is the brightness separated from that which makes it shine. For who, indeed, (will remove) the sun — and by "sun" understand me him who (presents himself) under the aspect of a circle, that is to say a round and fiery form, or rather, what one will say, that which emits a ray — (who will remove, I say) the sun from the light which is emitted by it and (which) shines? For the brightness, be it in a point or (in) a part of a small part or of time or of space, (who) will remove it? And indeed, the sun does not rise without its own clarity either, and that which shines and gleams is not separated either from that by which it has shone and gleamed. Therefore, because (the Son) shines without separating and without moving away, he is the Light which (is) from the Light; and, because he is begotten as Son by the Father, he is God from God; and, because he is perpetually with him who is perpetually, he will be confessed, and very justly, that he is from him who is and consubstantial with the Father; for he who is begotten is of the same essence and of the (same) nature as he who begets.

But, one will say, one can hear, in Job also, God who says: "Who is father of the rain? And who is he who has begotten the drops of dew? And from whose womb has the frost come out? And who has begotten the ice in the heaven?" (Job 38:28-29 LXX). Is it therefore that we will say that and the rain and the frost and also the ice are consubstantial with God because of these words, the one: "The father", the other: "He has begotten", and the (word): "He comes out of the womb?" But first (God) did not say: "I, I am the father of the rain", or: "I have begotten the dew", or: "It is from my womb that the frost has come out." But, when to Job, who thought to treat philosophically about sufferings and the expressions which (are) related to

them, he wanted to create doubt and embarrassment and to show him that much ignorance is spread over human science, he questions him under the form of doubt and he says: "Can you say, O man, who is the father of the rain or who has begotten the dew which is so abundant?" It is not to show the birth of these (phenomena) or (their) generation; but because human generations and other (generations) of the (beings) which (are) on the earth or the births are preceded by time and by labor, it is for this reason that he said: "Do not believe that I have need of that and of delay and (of) labor, just as of the generation, so that I make the dew and the rain and the ice and the frost come." And is it not with a rapidity faster than speech that this subsists by the will of a divine operation, or rather by a sign only, or if one can say about God something which is faster than that?

And then one must hear the words according to the quality of the objects affirmed by the word, and not wound the truth in the usage of expressions. For it is differently that one hears God as father of the rain, and differently (that one hears him as Father) of the Son and (Father) of this (Son) only-begotten. For the name of (Son) only-begotten shows that it is by God the Father that God the Word is begotten, the only one who (is) from the only one, and outside of every mode and (every) invention of thought of every generation; thus consequently the name of (Son) only-begotten defines and distinguishes the generation of the Son which (is) on high from the generations which (are) below and which (are) after that one, whether they exist, or whether they are said according to usage. Otherwise, if only this were written: "The Father has begotten the Son", and absolutely nothing else, one could understand, by the comparison and (by) the similitude of other expressions which (are) similar, a generation, not truly and of the essence of the Father, but according to usage, as concerning the rain and the frost and the ice. But, because these (words) which (concern) the generation of the Son do not stop at that only and that we do not have to do, as these vain (men) think, with a single expression, so that, as a result of the aberrant explanation of this, the (objects) of the faith are for us in danger of being lost, let them cease to gnaw on the unimportant words, like mice, in a manner which is unclean. For what shall we do, hearing John who says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). For, if he was in the beginning as he who is with him who is and as God with God, how can we understand that the generation of God, and which is in all time, is not true and hypostatic and eternal

and of the essence of him who (has) begotten it, but assimilate that one to the rain and the frost? And how shall we employ these words concerning the frost and the rain, if they are begotten by God as the Son, as you say? And how will it be fitting for one of these (phenomena) to say: "And no one knows the Son, except the Father; and no one also knows the Father, except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal him" (Matt. 11:27)? And how will the frost pass for being the brightness of the glory of God and the image of his hypostasis (Heb. 1:3)? For the thing made cannot be the image of him who made it; but the generation shows well what the father is in hypostasis because of the participation of the nature. You see how the partisans of Arius, in daring to diminish the divine generation of the Son, swim like light (beings) on similitudes of words, empty and which (are) devoid of sense, without distinguishing what is enunciated by the names so that they are said of him or what is indicated by them, and (how) they end up falling into the ultimate absurdity, they who in the shipwreck of their thoughts even say this: "What is astonishing if the Christ is called the wisdom of God and the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:24)? Behold, indeed, that Joel also has written: "The locust and the cankerworm and the caterpillar and the palmerworm, my great army which I have sent against you" (Joel 2:25). Is it therefore that and the locust and the cankerworm and the palmerworm are of the same divine essence, they who have been named the great army of God? To those it will be said very opportunely: "You are in error, you who know neither the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29). For the Christ, as God from God and who is perpetually from him who is perpetually, is the essential and subsisting wisdom and the subsisting and essential power. But the plagues of the locust and the palmerworm are operations of the divine power, which bring those who sin to conversion and to change for the better, (operations) by which is shown the greatness of the acting power which has such power even through the intermediary of the locust and the palmerworm, these vile (creatures), (operations) which Paul also has called sometimes the operations of miracles and sometimes by the name of "miracles", as (there) where he says: "For to one is given by the Spirit a word of wisdom, to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gift of healings, to another the operations of miracles" (1 Cor. 12:8-10); and in another place still: "Though I am nothing, and yet the signs of the apostles were operated among you in all patience by signs and by wonders and by miracles" (2 Cor. 12:11-12). Thus the divine Book is accustomed to call "miracles" the operations of the divine

power, just as also the plague of the locust and the palmerworm is called a great army.

It is in this manner, in fact, that he also armed hornets against the peoples who held the land of Israel, and (that), while by these very small (creatures) he showed the superiority and the invincibility of his own power. That is why also Jesus, the son of Nun, who after the great Moses was the conductor of the people and (his) general of the army, in recalling to his compatriots the astonishing miracles that God had done, said: "And he sent before you battalions of hornets and he drove out from before your face twelve kings of the Amorites; (it was) neither by your sword nor by your bow" (Josh. 24:12 LXX). Do you understand how this plan (of conduct) is? — It is so that even by vile creatures of this kind appears the infinity of the power of God. That is why therefore, when he also tormented Pharaoh by the frogs and by the hail and by the locust, he said: "It is so that I show in you my power and so that my name be proclaimed in all the earth" (Ex. 9:16; Rom. 9:17). However it is not because of that that we will regard Christ, the power and the essential strength of the Father, as the same thing as these prodigies and (these) miracles which are operated by him; for he who does is certainly another thing than what is done. And it is not necessarily that homonymies unite at the same time also the natures of the objects about which they are named. That is why God is denominated "Spirit", as John says: "God is Spirit" (John 4:24); the angels are also said "spirits"; for the prophet David sings: "He who makes his angels spirits" (Ps. 103:4). But it is not for that that we will regard as the same thing the angel and God; for the interval which (is) in the middle (namely the interval) of him who makes to what is made, is great, and one cannot say how great (it is).

Let the Arians therefore not deceive themselves, by considering and by producing in public with ignorance the birth and the generation of the dew and the frost and by thinking to show by the similitude of such (expressions) that the ineffable birth of the Son is false and not true and which (is) of the essence of the Father, and that they do not compare the power of the locust and the caterpillar and the palmerworm to the wisdom and to the essential and unique power of God. But let them hear David, who shows the truth of the divine generation of the Son and says: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand; from the womb before the morning star" (Ps. 109:1, 3 LXX) "I have begotten you" (Ps. 109:3). And, so that

no one thinks that these (words) are said of the lords who (are) said (such) improperly, (of) two kings, if it happens — for such tales of inventions and fables, which have credibility in no manner, are invented and forged by the Jews — because, in the Hebrew language, there are many honorable and secret names and which (are) reserved for God and by which nothing else is named, for example that of Elohim and that of Yéhyéh and that of Adonai, (names) that even with care those who have translated have themselves left voluntarily in many places without (them) translating, by showing through that the particular and incommunicable character of these names, it is of those that here also the prophet made use in singing: "Yéhyéh said to Adonai" (Ps. 109:1), that is to say: "The Lord (said) to the Lord of hosts"; for that is what these names mean.

Because therefore, when our Lord and our God Jesus-Christ accomplished all the economy of the inhumanation, after the resurrection from the dead, he ascended with his body above the heavens (cf. Eph. 4:10), as it is written, while he fills the universe divinely and incorporeally and (that) he humbled himself unto death (cf. Phil. 2:8) and (to) death which (happened) by the cross and (that) in nothing was he diminished from his own glory, but (that), even in the sufferings and in the weakness which (is) in the flesh and which he took voluntarily for us, he showed (his) strength and (his) impassibility and (that) by the sufferings he conquered death and prevailed over it in the combat legally, (for that, I say) the prophet, foreseeing from on high the mystery, wrote what, struck (as he was) like a cithara, he received from the Spirit the order to sing. That is why it is also for our instruction that he introduces a language, as if it came from God and Father addressed to the Son; for it was not possible that, we ourselves, we learn the truth otherwise, if this were not written in a human manner and in relation to our weakness. And if not, it is entirely evident that the incorporeal God does not speak by means of organs which produce the voice; for the word of God is the (fact) of willing only. And how also the Son, to hear, did he have need of words, he who both knows and wills the same things (namely) all those that the Father also (knows and wills)? For, of those whose essence is one and also the identity in all, outside of the fact that one is Father and that the other (is) Son, necessarily the will also is one and the same.

What therefore is that which, through the intermediary of the prophet, the word designates, by making a prosopopoeia: "The Lord said to the Lord: Sit at my right hand" (Ps. 109:1)? — Now that shows nothing else, if not the equality of honor of the Father and the Son. For the (fact) of thinking of the right hand concerning God and Father incorporeal and infinite is part of what (is) without intelligence. But, because among us that indicates honor, the fact of sitting at the right hand, by virtue of a human custom, indicates the elevated senses. And if not, if someone remained in this external and superficial language of the λέξεις, that is to say of the expressions, without arriving at the senses which are fitting for God, he would even find that the Son is more honorable than the Father as he who is seated at his right hand. But the Book had only one preoccupation (namely) to show by the words and (by) the senses which are current among us, as I (have) said, the equality of honor of the Father and the Son. And indeed, it knew clearly that, in whatever place someone makes the Son ascend more in honor, he will not put that one above the Father who begot him. And it is that sense that the expressions reported previously according to the language of the Hebrews also show. For, "Yéhyéh, says (the Book), said to Adonai" (Ps. 109:1); "The Lord (said) to the Lord of hosts." For, if the order were inverted and was: "The Lord of hosts said to the Lord", some would necessarily say that "this Lord of hosts" is attributed and given to the Father as to him who (is) superior, and (that) "this Lord", which is in the middle, is employed concerning the Son as for him who (is) inferior. Now now, on the contrary, it is concerning the Father that this name which passes for being in the middle, (namely) "this Lord", is employed and (that) he who without contest is himself (the one) who (is) superior (namely) "this Lord of hosts", is said concerning the Son, because the sacred Books take care to show us by the high signification of the expressions that the Son is not inferior to the Father, he who cannot arrive above the glory of the Father. And that is said according to the translation of the Greek language. And if not, according to the word of the Hebrews as we (have) said previously, both the (name) of Yéhyéh and the (name) of Adonai equally form part of the names which are incommunicable and which are said only of God. That is why therefore all those also who have translated have transmitted in the same manner concerning the two (names): "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand" (Ps. 109:1).

And, so that it does not seem, according to the stupidity that the partisans of Nestorius want, that it is by grace that the man entered (and) was enrolled among the sons and (that) by a leap he ascended upon the celestial throne and was elevated and (that) he regards as robbery, according to the word of Paul (cf. Phil. 2:6), the (fact) of being equal with God, and (so that) the Father does not seem to lie, when he says through the prophet: "I will not give my glory to another" (Isa. 42:8; 48:11), he added the cause, when he continued next: "From the womb before the morning star" (Ps. 109:3 LXX) "I have begotten you" (Ps. 109:3), crying out so to speak: "For this reason sit at my right hand, even when you are incarnate, because you are not another Son, outside of him who is begotten of me truly and from my womb, as one would say, but one and the same." And it is by using the manner of speaking of men that he put that also as proof of a true generation. And if not, what womb (has) he who is without body? But, just as, concerning an action, while, we, it is with the hands that we (it) do and that, he, it is by the word that he does all, he uses the names which are habitual to us and (that) he says in the manner of men: "It is I who with my hand have established the heavens" (Isa. 45:12 LXX), and (that), we also, (we) to him (say): "Your hands have made me and fashioned me" (Ps. 119:73), in the same way, while the corporeal and consubstantial births which (happen) among us are done in general by the wombs, according to what is found in Isaiah: "Will a woman forget her son? Or will she not have pity on the children of her womb?" (Isa. 49:15 LXX) and also in the Proverbs likewise: "What (shall I say), son of my womb? What (shall I say), son of my vows?" (Prov. 31:2) he himself also, in a manner which is fitting to man and yet is certainly very significant, said: "It is from my womb that before the morning star" (Ps. 109:3 LXX) "I have begotten you" (Ps. 109:3). That is why it is very well that these 318 Fathers, in transmitting to us the faith and in attaching themselves to the Book inspired by God, said concerning the Son: "The only-begotten is born of the Father", that is to say from the essence of the Father.

And the (word): "It is before the morning star", that is to say Lucifer, "that I have begotten you" (Ps. 109:3), makes known that it is before all the world and before every creature endowed with intelligence and before the spirits on high and the immaterial armies (that he begot him). For God who (is) in the Trinity is the Light by essence; and the angels, because they have part in the brightness which (comes) from there and, as one would say, in the outflow (of the light) and that they can

sustain this (light) and bring us commandments full of light and knowledge, are "Lucifer" stars, such as Gabriel appeared, when he explained to Daniel, as much as it is possible, and (to him) revealed the (senses) unknown of the prophetic enigmas and (to him) said: "Daniel, I have come out now to teach you understanding; at the beginning of the prayer, a word went forth, and, I, I have come to make (it) known, because, you, you are a man of desires; and consider the word" (Dan. 9:22-23 LXX). He was Lucifer, when he also made known to the Mother of God the Virgin that annunciation, which indicated the coming in the flesh of the ineffable and superior Light, which has risen for those who were sitting in the darkness and in the shadow of death (cf. Luke 1:78-79) and (which) has filled all the earth with a divine and well-seen and (is) luminous knowledge. It is therefore from (his) womb and from (his) essence, and also before every creature and before every Lucifer, that the Father has begotten the Son. For, (that) smacks of folly that we considered that this is said of Lucifer, that is to say of that sensible and seen morning star, (there) where it is after the creation of the heaven and the earth and the plants and the grass that on the fourth day came into existence the sun and the moon and all the stars.

But, just as the (word): "The Son", and the (fact) of being said to have been begotten from the womb and all the words of this kind show him who was begotten consubstantial to him who begot him, so also the (fact) that the Son is named the Word shows (his) impassibility and (his) incorporeity and (his generation) without emission (of seed) and which (is) exempt from all that is seen in the corporeal generations. For the word is an impassible birth, it which has come forth from the intelligence, and not from the mixture or the union of bodies; and, like an image, it lets escape by imitation every intellectual movement which is found in the thought and it (it) shows and makes known; and it is other, outside of that of which it is the image, and it shows and figures it in itself. And with the word, when it comes forth, the breath also necessarily comes forth. But our word, as that which comes forth from a changeable intelligence and is produced by parts of the body (namely) the lips and the tongue, is driven out and exhaled at the same time as it comes forth; and also the breath of the mouth, that is to say the exhalation, has ceased with the coming forth (of the word) and it has vanished.

Now from God the Father, from the intelligence which (is) above all, from him who is, from him who subsists (from) him who gives also to others their existence, (from God the Father, I say) such are both the Word and the Spirit, living and subsisting and creative and almighty and who contain all that is created and (who) are in the Father, just as the Father also is in them, in an infinite and incorporeal manner, and as (he) knows and (attests) he who said in the Gospels: "I (am) in the Father, and the Father is in me" (John 14:10). For just as the Word is the brightness of the glory and the image of the hypostasis (Heb. 1:3) of the Father, so also the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father (John 15:26), and necessarily he shows in himself him of whom he is the Spirit, because he is of the same essence as him who brought him forth, so that he may also be the Spirit of truth who does not make lie by a different essence him from whom he proceeds. That is why, indeed, he is counted and praised with the Father and with the Son, and it is in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit that we are baptized. For, if it is not eternally that he subsisted with the Father and with the Son and that he were not consubstantial and equal in honor to them, it would be necessary that he be ranked with the creature and that he not be elevated with the uncreated nature and that we ourselves not believe in him as we have believed in the Father and in the Son.

The holy Trinity is therefore coeternal, uncreated and consubstantial. And, just as the Father is God, the Son also is God, the Holy Spirit also is God. And, just as the Father is Light, the Son also is Light, the Holy Spirit also is Light. And, just as the Father is author and creator and almighty, so also the Son, also the Holy Spirit. But these are not because of that three principles. For, by that that the Son and the Holy Spirit rise up to the Father and (that) one is begotten by him and (that) the other proceeds (from him), there is necessarily one single principle and one single God, who is seen in one single essence and divinity and in three hypostases not confused, good, just (and) who approaches all with solicitude and with goodness; for "the Lord is good to all things at the same time, and his mercy (extends) over all his works" (Ps. 144:9). For, because he is the author of all things, it is with justice that he has solicitude for all things and occupies himself (with them).

From where therefore has it ascended to the spirit of the Manicheans, who are more perverse than all, to introduce two uncreated and without beginning

principles, the Good and the Evil, the Light and the Darkness which they have also named the Matter? For, who is it who will not refute the absurdity by itself? And who, after the refutation, will not deplore the lack of intelligence? For a principle is the cause and the root of all, while it has nothing which surpasses it, so that it is still properly a principle. Which of them therefore shall we say is the cause of the other, so as to attribute to that one the name of principle? Which thing among them? The Good (is the cause) of the Evil? Or, on the contrary, the Evil (is the cause) of the Good? And how is it possible that what is the Good by essence is the cause and the root and the origin of the substance of this Evil, or that the Evil in its turn gives the beginning to the nature of this Good which in every thing is foreign and opposed to it? They make lie therefore both the name of principle, because in nothing is one superior to the other or surpasses it.

Moreover (Mani) says: "Each of them, indeed, is uncreated and without beginning and the Good which is the Light and the Evil which is the Darkness and the Matter, and they share nothing one with the other." — What then? Say to me who question you: Shall we profess that those also are infinite? For to what is uncreated and without beginning necessarily also the infinite is fitting; now it is the property of the infinites also (to be) without body; and, what is without body, it is certain that it is also intellectual; and how is it not manifestly the (fact) of the ultimate folly that we say the Matter immaterial and intellectual?

And, when the two are infinite and they are not held somewhere, (it is) of all necessity that the things which are completely contrary and enemies and the things which by nature do not agree with one another be mixed; and from then on there are no longer two principles, but one single principle which is at the same time mixed and mingled. But if each of them is separated and has a proper place, (it is) finite; and the things which are finite are necessarily also in bodies, even if not in thick and dense (bodies), but in (bodies) subtle in some way; now the property of bodies, it is the (fact) of being finite, and, while they are finite and (they are) bodies, how are they uncreated and without beginning? And what however holds them (separated) one from the other, so that they are without mixture? For, (it is) necessary that there be some third (principle) and that this one (be) without beginning and uncreated, so that always and perpetually be held (separated) one from the other this Good and this Evil, these natures enemies and adversaries one

to the other and without beginning and uncreated. Consequently (there are) three principles, and not two. For it is necessary that we suppose that this (principle) intermediate belongs to a foreign nature outside of these two (principles), so that it can also (them) enclose and shut in (separated) one from the other, they who are so enemies. For, if we relate this (principle) intermediate to each of these two principles and that we decree that it belongs either to the essence of the Light or to that of the Darkness, it will be needful again of another (principle) intermediate which prevents the mixture.

But, as it seems, it is permitted to these perverse ones to forge and to invent thus vainly these stupidities and these blasphemies and (that) which cannot at all in any way stand up and to conduct themselves according to an independent law and with audacity and to say "essence" the evil Darkness and to arm them against the good and eternal Light and to say "uncreated" what has absolutely no consistency and, while they are the Matter and that it is according to their word also that they are thus named, to (them) decree and to (them) call "immaterial and intellectual" and to limit still those and to enclose them in places in the same manner (as the Good) and to say that this Good, which they have denominated "Light" and "Tree of Life", occupies the regions (situated) toward the east and the west and the north, and that the Tree of Death for they also call thus the Matter which is very evil and uncreated — (occupies) the (regions) austral and southern. And, after having made θεολογία, that is to say theology, in such an impious and (so) blasphemous manner, they bring examples which are fitting to their theology and they say in proper terms: "The difference and the distance of "these two principles are such as " (are) also (those) of a king and a "pig", and: "The one, it is thus that in a palace that he comports himself in his "own places, and the other, it is like a pig that he rolls in the mire and "nourishes himself on rot and delights in it, or it is like a serpent that he "glides into his hole", and after they have said in addition that the pig and the serpent are born spontaneously, so that by these examples the (quality) of uncreated might not be lost in some way for (the principles). It was fitting, indeed, that the principle of the uncreated Matter of the Manicheans be such and that it be assimilated to such (animals); it is from it, they also say very justly, that they have come into existence, since those who have become pigs in their intelligence imagine it creative and efficient.

But, in order to bring the subject back to what is more necessary from the point of view of refutation, setting aside now these ridiculous (statements), I will place before you here some of the abominable fables of Mani, who was mad—it is from him that the Manichaeans are named—(fables) by which you will know how they enclose their uncreated principles in places. Indeed, he expresses himself in one of his writings that should not be quoted, or rather that are worthy of darkness and oblivion, in these terms: "As for those things which are perpetually and always from the beginning—he speaks of Matter and God—each of them exists by its nature. And thus exists the Tree of Life, which is adorned there with all its beauties and all its magnificences and filled and clothed with all its goods and firm and fixed in its nature; and its earth contains three regions, the northern which is outside and below, and the east and the west outside and below; and further below there is nothing that is plunged or clothed by it in any of the regions; but the infinite is outside and below; there is no foreign body, neither around it, nor beneath it, nor in any place of these three regions. But it is to (the Tree of Life) below and outside, to the north and to the east and to the west, and there is nothing that surrounds and encloses it in these three regions; but it is in itself apart, being clothed with its fruits in itself, and the kingdom is in it."

And after that, when many and endless stupidities and inventions and absurdities had been reported, which it is also not easy to exhaust in much time, because it is on the same (subjects) that he often goes and comes back again and circulates and wanders as in darkness—for such are the thoughts of darkness—he says again this concerning the Good: "And it is not seen, he says, in the southern region and that because (it is) hidden in what is in its bosom; indeed, God has surrounded that place with a wall." And, after having uttered in public (stupidities) still more numerous, he adds others which do not differ or depart in anything from those by impiety. "Its light and its goodness (of the good Tree) are invisible, so that it does not "give an occasion of desire to the evil Tree, which is in the south, and (so that) it is (not) for it an occasion to be excited and tormented and to be in danger. But that one (the good Tree) is enclosed in glory, and it does not give an occasion because of its goodness; but it has protected itself in its justice, and it is in that glory, while being perpetually in the nature of its greatness in these three regions. And as for that Tree of Death also, it has no life by its nature, nor fruits of goodness on any of its branches; and, it, it is perpetually in the southern region;

and it also has a proper place, which is above it." You see with how many outrages and sufferings they dare to burden God who alone is good, they who have made of their blasphemies a subject and a matter of piety and who do not even say what agrees with themselves.

And indeed, that one (God) whom (Mani), in these words which have just been cited here, said to be without limit, he shows that he has an end and that (he is) limited, by enclosing him in these three regions, in the east and in the west and in the north. And he says that "it is not seen in the southern region and (that it is) hidden in its own bosoms." And yet he says that "it has enclosed its own place with a wall." But, if it were invisible by (its) nature, then since it was not seen at all by the Matter which is in the southern region, it had itself the help which comes from its own nature, whereas for that Evil it was invisible and necessarily ungraspable or rather unassailable. Indeed, he who raises a wall and surrounds himself with it, it is to protect himself personally that he raises it, because he fears the attack and the coming of him who is stronger than him. Consequently (God) is both weak and fearful and in need of inventions that protect him, and he is not without need as God. And then, if he has surrounded that place with a wall, of what matter has he surrounded (the place) and built (the wall)? And, if he has surrounded (the place) with a wall, it is necessarily when it did not exist before that he made the wall; therefore, before having made the wall, he was without protection. And how did he not know in advance that he himself was going to need a wall, since he is God, and (did he not) build it from the beginning? And how was Matter then inactive, without attacking the Good, when it was deprived (of the wall) from the beginning, rather than having attacked it, after the place was fortified, according to your stupidities, O such a one, and having caused fear and having shown itself strong enough to take even a parcel from the Good?

And how did the Good, while it could build a wall with a very good matter, not organize with that same (matter) a good world that is without mixture with Evil? If it made an immaterial and intellectual wall, it is a wonder how he who can bring immaterial essences from non-being to being did not also easily make the material (essences)? If also that wall was αὐθυπόστατος, that is, existed by itself, as you are accustomed to say, there has entered us yet a third (principle) without beginning and uncreated; consequently we must count it with these two (principles) and,

instead of two, it is three principles that we must conjecture. If it is from his essence that the good God established the wall, in what manner did that incorporeal diminish or divide itself? If, according to your fables, Evil was to arm itself against the Good in a war, because it desired its beauty which is very shining and (very) remarkable, and (if) the wall was of that same beloved and magnificent essence, it is with another nature that it was necessary to surround oneself with a wall for protection. And if not, if it was of the same essence as God, it sufficed for Matter to detach a parcel from the wall, which it was very easy and within its reach to break, and to be satisfied in its desire and to mix with the Good. How then do you enclose the Good on all sides as one who needs some protection and vigilance, and do you say that "the earth which suits it comprises three regions, the northern, the eastern, the western," and that there is not even below an undergarment? For I use your expression, when you speak as of someone who is cold, who with many coverings warms himself and wraps his feet, so that from below nothing that chills appears also concerning him.

But let us see ourselves his reflection worthy of God, because of which (he expresses himself) thus: "(Why) does the Good hide itself from him who fights with God?"—"So that it does not give, he says, an occasion of desire to the evil Tree, which is in the south, and (so that) it (does not) become for it an occasion to be "excited and tormented and to be in danger. But, itself, it is enclosed in glory and it does not give an occasion because of its goodness." Who can bear these spider webs? And who will weep, as is fitting, over rational souls, seeing them entangled in these (webs)? Indeed, it would give cause for sadness and anguish if, by saying this also to donkeys and bulls, they could deceive them, how much more (by saying this) to men who have not completely lost the (fact) of being that very thing, (namely) what men are.

Indeed, he who is evil by essence, how would he desire the Good, because someone also desires what he is capable of receiving? And he who is evil by nature cannot have part in the Good. For the (characteristics) of essences, that is, of natures, remain immutable, fixed and firm and which have absolutely no mixture with the contrary; indeed, "what communion has Light with Darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14) also exclaimed Paul, considering these things. And secondly, after that impure Mani said that "the Good is invisible for the southern region,"

how does he further say that "the Matter which remains and dwells in the south and in the southern region" can desire what is not seen? Indeed, on the one hand, if it remained in the southern region, it could not see what it desired; on the other hand, when it went out, it crossed the boundaries of its inheritance that this audacious and (this) independent and, to speak according to truth (this) iniquitous one fixed for it from the beginning. And how does it agree with the impure inventions of that one the (fact) that the good God encloses himself, so that, upon seeing him, the evil Tree is not excited and tormented and that it is not in danger? For what danger is there here (namely) that Matter had part in the Good, if it could have part in it? On the contrary, there was even advantage in that (the good God) permitted this, (namely) that by participation in what is better he might change that which is so evil. And, he too, God will justly bear the guilt for envy, because he hides himself, he who by his own beauty can draw to the Good and subdue and subject him who is opposed to him and (who) fights him; for he who has condescended to desire yields and submits to what is desired and he resists it no longer in anything.

But he (Mani) who said: "God encloses himself because of his goodness, lest, when the evil Tree is excited by the sight, it be taken by desire and be in danger," after having forgotten his fables turns all the danger against that Good and who had pity. For he bitterly prepares and arms against him the Evil, the Matter, the evil Tree of Death. For let all the names, indeed, be said at once at the same time and let all men learn to whom the Manichaeans attribute victories against the good God!

And first, they say these things concerning Matter: "The Tree of Death is divided into many (trees)"; and: "War and cruelty are in them"; and: "They are strangers to peace and filled with all wickedness and they never have good fruits"; and: "It is divided against its fruits, and the fruits also (are divided) against the Tree, and they do not agree with him who engendered them. But, all, they form the moth for the corruption of their place, and they are not subject to him who engendered them. But the whole Tree is evil and which never does anything good; but it is divided against itself, and each of its parts corrupts what is near to it." And now they begin from then on to gather an army and a powerful meeting of soldiers, or rather ridiculous and without consistency, and to divide Matter into many parcels and to name those "fruits"; and they say that (the fruits) corrupt one another, and they

suppose that these revolt against the Tree that engendered them and that like wool they are destroyed and corrupted by the moth. As for the moth, they do not say that it grows, that is, is born, but that it is formed by (the fruits), so that they come to disappear and they destroy and annihilate one another, before coming to the operation which is against the Good.

And yet, because those who forge the atheistic inventions of an impure and abominable glory have not understood this and because immediately they say without examination what pleases them and because at that very moment they destroy that and because they add invention upon invention in a more unbelievable manner, they add (and) insert these other things that follow those. Indeed, after having said that these (members) of Matter, that mother with the children, revolted and that all were confused pell-mell and that they were filled with revolt and trouble, because they have all set themselves against one another, it is following this revolt that immediately and against all likelihood they have united into a single army and (for) a unanimous war against the Light those who were revolting, after having called the same also "fruits" of the evil Tree and members of Death and having made them armed people. For it is permitted to them both to make essences of Evil and of Death from things that do not exist and to divide those into a great number and to reunite them again into one and to present at the same time revolt and agreement and to fill everything with inconsistent enigmas.

But it is fitting to place before you the ancient history of that astonishing war, or rather their mythology (of the Manichaeans), by choosing, from among these inventions and these many chatterings and, to say it in few words, infinite ones, a small number of (examples), as much as is possible, by which the lack of intelligence of their blasphemy will be manifest to everyone, as the Apostle says (2 Timothy 3:9). They have written, indeed, also these strong things: "These things (pertain) to matter and to (its) fruits and to its members. But, it is from here, it is from (their) revolt that they had an occasion to ascend even to the worlds of the Light. Indeed, these members of the Tree of Death did not know one another or they did not notice one another; for each of them knew nothing more, if not its voice, and they saw what was before their eyes, and, when something cried out, they heard it and they perceived that and they went out impetuously towards the voice; but they knew nothing else. And they were thus excited and pushed by one

another to go out even to the borders of the glorious earth of the Light. And, when they saw the admirable and magnificent spectacle (of the Light) which is by far better than their own, then they gathered together—that is the dark Matter—and they plotted against the Light, in order to mix themselves with it. And they did not know because of (their) folly that a powerful and strong God dwelt there; and yet they sought to ascend on high, because the renown of the divinity had never been known to them or they had never noticed who God is. But they looked in a foolish manner due to the desire for the spectacle of those blessed worlds and they thought that it was theirs. And therefore all the members of the Tree of Darkness, which is the corrupting Matter, rose up and they ascended with numerous powers, whose number cannot be told. And, all, they were clothed with the matter of fire. And these members were different; indeed, some had hard bodies and they were infinite in greatness, and others were incorporeal and intangible, who had a subtle tangibility in the same manner as demons and the specters of phantoms. And, "after having risen, all the Matter ascended with its winds and (its) tempests and (its) water and (its) fire and (its) demons and (its) phantoms and (its) princes and (its) powers, and (that) while, all, they were in the depth, in order to introduce themselves into the Light. And because of this trouble, which was prepared from the depth against the earth of the Light and against the holy fruits, it was necessary that a parcel of the Light came and mixed itself with these Evil ones, so that the enemies might be captured by means of the mixture and (so that there be peace for the Good and (that) the nature of the Good be preserved, after the blessed nature had been delivered from the fire of Matter and from the corrupting moth, and (so that) in turn the Luminous ones might be rid of Matter by the power which was mixed in, so that Matter disappears and (that) the Tree of Life became God in all and over all. In the world of the Light, indeed, there is no fire that burns to be launched against Evil, nor iron that cuts, nor water that drowns, or any other bad thing similar. For everything is Light and the region (is) free and there is no malice against it; but that is an issue, or a passage, so that the enemies, once they have been dispersed by the parcel which came from the Light, cease (their) attack and be captured by means of the mixture."

Who, after having undertaken to drink the draught of this lack of intelligence, will not be drunk in his spirit? And who, having intelligence, will not laugh in every way at this vain stupidity, which contains all these disordered and disparate things

and reported as it happens? How, indeed, did the uncreated Matter and without beginning and coeternal with the Good be found to abound in all these evil fruits and "in numerous powers and whose number cannot be told," as the impious writer said, "in hard bodies," of which he said that "the greatness is infinite"? For what reason will ever concede that there are infinite bodies in subtle bodies, in phantoms, in winds, in tempests, in water, in fire, in demons, in princes who are in the depth? For he enumerated all that, arraying the army of Matter in battle.

Let (the Manichaeans) say therefore if these fruits had grown at the same time as (Matter) from the start and from the beginning, or if it was at the end that they had been added. If it is from the start, numerous are these (fruits) without beginning and uncreated and which surpass (all) number and, to say it simply, the whole gathering of those who have been named. But, if, in the likeness of a tree, it is in time that (Matter) made these fruits grow and brought forth all this load of wickedness, a certain part, (taken) from it, would be uncreated and many (parts would be) created and which would have been acquired afterwards. And how is it fitting that we consider the same essence as created and uncreated? And how did these fruits of Matter, while they are in some way foolish and unconscious and they see only what is before (their) feet and they can scarcely hear the voice of those who are nearby because of (their) laziness and (their) heaviness and (their) carelessness and they revolt against one another, thus desire at the same time in the same spirit and go with one accord to the borders of the earth of the Light like those who are arrayed and led under a single battalion and (under) a (single) troop, and see the spectacle of the Light and, after having been struck by desire, desire the beauty? These things, indeed, do not at all pertain to folly and unconsciousness; for the desire of what is truly the Good, which is God, someone will rightly define it as superior intelligence, and not folly.

In what manner, O excellent one, while (the fruits of Matter) have the nature of folly and unconsciousness—for you have also defined Evil as a nature—could they in sum desire the blessed glory of the Good? And how has the writer full of all insanity said concerning them: "They saw the spectacle of the admirable and splendid Light, which is by far superior to their own, and then they gathered together, and that is the dark Matter"? What splendor, indeed, or what admirable Light was there in sum in the dark Matter, (Light) concerning which you also say

after examination: "When the fruits of Matter saw the spectacle of the admirable and splendid Light, which is by far superior to their own...?" Was there, indeed, tell me, a parcel of the Light in the dark Matter? Then therefore (Matter) was rather mixed with the Light from the beginning, and superfluous (was) that war which is so cruel. For it was necessary that (Matter) go towards (the Light) amicably as towards a relative and (that it) send to it an embassy of peace and (that it) ask it for the complete mixture of the Light, a parcel of which was itself mixed with the dark Matter. And we must still consider this (namely) how he said concerning the fruits of Matter, that is, of its members: "And then they gathered together, and that was the dark Matter", so therefore that we do not understand that something else is Matter, and something else the fruits. Now, if Matter (was) in these, (the fruits) many and infinite were indeed without beginning and uncreated, and (there) were not only two principles, as we have said previously.

As for me, it happens that I wonder how the immaterial and intellectual and invisible Light of the good God was visible for the material fruits or how the writer forgot—to concede that to him also—the wall with which he surrounded the Light. Indeed, it was impossible that those who came to the borders of the glorious earth and (who) stopped there somewhere should pierce that wall with their eyes and (that they see the Light which was enclosed and contained inside, concerning which that wise one initiated into these things which are not sacred and (that) impure initiate wrote above with stupidity: "It is not seen by the southern region, and that because it is hidden in what is in its bosom. God, indeed, fortified the place with a wall." And again: "But, it, it is enclosed in glory."

Who therefore will make a refutation against these things which thus contradict one another and suffice to overthrow each other reciprocally, because it is even against nature that these things which (are) said fight? Indeed, what has not been said among impossible things by the cacographer and skillful (apostle) of the Manichaeans and the chief of abominable opinions and the legislator of iniquity? Has he not attributed a nature to Evil, and that one without beginning and uncreated? Has he not opposed and set that one up in front of the essentially good God? By dividing Evil, that is to say Matter, into infinite fruits, has he not made many uncreated beings and innumerable gods and has he not presented those to us without beginning? And has he not shown that the polytheism of the pagans and

the gigantomachy are modest and mediocre next to (his) blasphemy? If those, by a gift (which comes) from men, introduce as if by an adoption (and) make gods for themselves and they give to these (gods) victory against the giants, and (if) it is against him who alone is God, against the cause of that which is, against him who (is) above all, that that one (Mani) arrays in battle a bad army and Matter and that he suddenly creates a co-eternal enemy, who has fruits that grow and sprout at the same time (namely) the assemblies of demons and adverse powers, is it not to these (fruits), while they are unconscious and mad by nature, that he has given according to the old wives' refrains of his fables the desire for the superior Light? Does he not suppose material (and) visible that which is immaterial and invisible? Does he not construct a wall and enclose the Light within it and, as if it had no wall, does he not make that one be seen from afar? And, after having said that it is because of (their) madness that the fruits of Matter, or rather Matter itself, in the likeness of a family which comprises many persons, armed itself against the Light, (has he not) made the aggressor come to a superior intelligence? It (Matter) conquered, indeed, because the good God, having found himself in great danger and having been seized with fear, for (his) deliverance from the evils which were suspended above him, came to the necessity of satisfying the desire of Matter and of containing its madness and of detaching from his own Light a parcel and of sending it below, (parcel) which he says also became mixed with the Bad. The many-personed Matter, indeed, was superior in number, since it was laden with all these fruits. How much wiser was the Rhea of the pagans, it seems, than the good God of the Manichaeans—and indeed, this one who is so weak and (so) fearful and (so) empty of intelligence is their (God), and not that of any of those who think well—where it is reported in the fables that she deceived by tricks her own husband Kronos, who ate his children, and (that), in place of the little child who remained to her and had just been born, she hid a stone in the swaddling clothes and (arranged) it to the likeness of a little child and (that) by (this) deception she made him swallow the stone.

And consider for me the “phlykaria”, that is to say the puerile inventions, of Mani: “In the world of Light,” he says, “there is no fire which burns to be launched against Evil, and no more iron which cuts, and no more water which drowns.” For did God have need of that, O (you) who are more impure than anyone? And what? By a single sign could he not destroy everything at once and all of a sudden, he

who produces everything by a word of his mouth (Heb 1:3), according to what was said by Paul? But you have done nothing strange, you who have added still that to (your) blasphemies. You, indeed, who have said: “He found himself in danger,” and: “For (his) deliverance and so that the enemies be appeased and yield and go away, he will give a parcel of (his) own Light,” to the likeness of those who become with their own hands their own murderers, so as not to be taken prisoner, you have attached yourself to your impieties (you) who have thought concerning him that he also has need of machines of war for (his) vengeance. And it is still with solemn words that you hide his weakness and the misery of his indigence, by saying: “This parcel was given to Matter as a bait of flattery and deception,” so that, after that “the mixture—thus as, you, you say—be purified and (that) the Light be found purer”—as if you believed you were discoursing on the dregs mixed with wine, and “not on God—“and (that), after the purification—so that I say that also like you—Matter attains completely to destruction”; for it is in his own terms that I have thus cited above that you say: “So that Matter disappears.”

Why then, O vain one, have you vainly sewn all these words which fight with God? For it is to the ultimate madness that the “symperasma”, that is to say the final conclusion of the reasoning of these varied detours, has come and ended for you. Indeed, if you have posited as a principle that Matter and its fruits corrupt one another, so that they also form the destructive moth, you should have left aside that one (Matter), which a little later is going to corrupt itself, and not that, by your fables you set it against the Good and that you allow that which is eaten by the moth to win victories over God. And perhaps another will say: “But it was necessary that a parcel of the Light be mixed with Matter, so that that which is better vanquished and that by a change it made Matter pass and attracted it to itself.” If he who was mad with this pure madness had that opinion, perhaps his fictions would have a color (of truth) or he would not lay the foundation of this abominable opinion. Indeed, the whole debate for him (is) to give power to Evil and to show that sin is not condemnable, as if Matter forced to sin, it which forms the destructive moth. He said, indeed, above: “It is for this that a parcel (taken) from the Light was given to Matter, when it armed itself against it in the war—for again I will cite here his words—(it is) so that the nature of the Good was preserved, after the blessed nature was delivered from the fire of Matter and from the corrupting moth.”

If therefore the nature of the Good gave as a ransom for itself a parcel of itself to Matter, so as not to experience the fire and the corrupting moth, it is very evident that the parcel, which was given by the Good and was mixed with Matter, was given to be destroyed and to be burned, until the mixture was purified, according to the stupidities of Mani who was mad. Therefore the Good was cut in two, and the parcel, which was torn from the Light, is enslaved to Matter, subjected to the destructive moth and forced to sin.

They (the Manichaeans) say that this parcel of the Light, which was mixed with Matter, also gave an occasion for this world to be created and that God was forced, because of this kind of mixture with Evil, to make the universe. “Otherwise, why,” they say, “did God have need of the world and of men who were not going to obey him? For it is following this mixture that all things were organized, and with them man also; for, he also, he is a parcel of the whole world!” And how, when you are mad in this—for we will not say: (When) you profess—will someone endure you? And how does God create by necessity? How will he who was constrained in a tyrannical manner by Matter, following this tyrannical mixture, organize the harmony of the world? How, when the fruits of Matter revolt and corrupt one another and (that) by fact of a war and a revolt and a brawl they have snatched a parcel from the Good, will something be organized, and will it not rather be disunited? For revolt and necessity are the mothers of disunion, and not of organization. From where therefore is this universe conducted and governed with order, when the seasons present themselves with good weather, that day and night, the sun and the moon return and go away with order by appropriate successions and resumptions which (come) from one another, that the winds blow, that the earth is sown and harvested, that the sea recognizes its own limits and is restrained by the sand and stops and holds back the march of its waves and brings back towards itself the swelling and the height of its waves?—It is necessarily because the author and the chief is one and stable and all-powerful. But, if according to your word it was revolt and necessity which preceded the creation and that it was they who had the authority—for we will concede thus—there would be nothing which is moved with order, but everything would be disunited. From where therefore do you say that you follow Plato, O (you) who (are) more impure than all? Indeed, because the Divine Book puts you outside and (that) it chases you far

from it as barbarians and (those) who are in all ignorant of the sacred words, you rush towards foreign testimonies and which (are) from the outside, and that although they shut the doors in your face. Thus for all the world you are and adversaries and enemies and odious. How, indeed, ought you not (to be), you who do not say even that which agrees with yourselves? For, although Plato thought that matter is eternal, however (he) did not (think) that it is evil, nor that (it belongs) to an evil nature, or that it does evil, or that it opposes the good, thus as, yourselves (you think); just as, he, he also says that it is from it that God made this world, and that is why he calls it both mother and nurse and she who receives all, and he venerates it by honorable names. But he does not put forward that the Creator came to the quality of Creator against his will and by necessity, according to your language and your thought which fights with God, but that it is of his own free will and because of his goodness alone; that is why he also says: “And we say the cause, for which God organized the creation and this universe: (it is that) he was good, and, for him who is good, there is no jealousy, and (that) for nothing.” And assuredly it is very well that (he said) that. But in this (namely) that the matter, from which (is made) the world, is eternal, we are not of (his) opinion; for this material world is created, and that which is created is not eternal. Indeed, the uncreated God is alone eternal, and all that does not make part of the essence which (is) above all, that also is created and is not eternal, thus as the word of piety shows.

From where (come) therefore the evils? they say—That is there, indeed, a question of force of the Manichaeans, by which they drag together the ignorant to their own perdition. For myself, I say that it is from yourselves, O (you) who (are) more wicked than all, that the evils are. And, since you yourselves have the solution of the difficulty—for you are the source of all the Evil which produces the illness, after having been ill of your own will—do not seek the evils in another place. Why, indeed, do you try to pierce rocks and to seek the treasure of Evil which you possess, after you have buried it in your own earth? For Evil is not an essence, but a deviation of a free movement. Indeed, just as God created the eyes of the body so that we see and (that) we have part in this sensible and visible light, and (that) he did not organize blindness—for blindness is the privation of light; if someone by his will closes his eyes, he has organized (and) disposed blindness for himself, and he will not blame God for that; indeed, he is the author, not of a privation, but of

the essences—so, he also created the intelligence which (is) in us to the likeness of an intellectual eye, so that we have part in the divine and intelligible light and (that) we apply ourselves to the contemplation of that which is seen and that by the beauty and (by) the harmony of the world we reflect by analogy on him who made and regulated this order. Indeed, his (perfections) invisible, says Paul, since the creation of the world, are seen by his servants (Rom 1:20), when they are understood; and another sage (says): "For it is by the variety of the creatures that is seen by analogy their Creator." But, if by our will we remove from this contemplation our intelligence and (that) we turn it towards the pleasures of the passions, we have closed, because we (have) wanted (it), (our) intellectual eye and we have organized in what concerns it blindness, which is the removal from God; now the removal from God, that is the privation of the light, and that is there the sin—which is a privation, and not an essence—(sin) which would not exist, if, I, I had not removed from the contemplation which (is directed) on the nature (my) intellectual eye and (that) I had not closed it.

But you will say that it was necessary that we be immutable in relation to Evil and absolutely incapable of sinning. — But you seem to me to want nothing else, if not that, instead of man, you be a stone or wood, and honor the insensible creature before that which possesses will and reason. That one, indeed, is immobile in relation to sin; for the stone and the wood and if there is something such are absolutely not capable of sin. As for the rational creatures, it is for this that God made them (namely) so that they have part in his goodness. And, because that one is the essential wisdom and the justice and the light, we also, by an intellectual movement and by the (fact) that we raise ourselves towards it and (that) we have part in its science and in the light which from that one is produced in us, we will be able to be just and good and who (will be) enlightened in the science of the celestial things according to that which will be seized by us. That is why sages also from among those who (are) profane have enunciated also this definition of philosophy. "Philosophy is the imitation of man in relation to that which is the best as much as it is possible." Now (they said) that, not from another place—from where?—if not from this wisdom which (is) ours and (is) true, which teaches that man was made in the image and to the likeness of God (Gen 1:26), in that he can receive by the exercise of the virtues the image, that is to say the similitude, and the divine likeness; and a very great mark of the image, that is free will. Indeed, if

it was not by our own force that we conducted ourselves, but (if) we were conducted by a certain necessity, it is in what (is) very important, in that very thing, that we would lack the similitude in relation to the model, and it is in a capital part that the image ought to be something mutilated. After therefore that we have been convinced that we conduct ourselves, we have received also a suitable power and a force quite sufficient so as not to submit ourselves to any one of the things which constitute sin. And that is shown clearly by those who have practiced perfection; for, if there was not in this rational animal a sufficient force to do good, necessarily none of those who at any time have led an ascetic life would practice perfection. But, if it is the great number who appear to have done good, it is a blame for the laziness of those who have not done good, and not for God who created; for, while they could, they have not done. But it was necessary, he says, that the soul not be united with this body, and it would not have inclined towards sin. — But that is not what causes that we sin, O good one; but (the cause is) that you will have handled badly the reins of (your) will. That is why, although the nature of the angels is exempt from bond in relation to the flesh, we see that Satan, who formerly was counted with the Lucifers, and fell, because he represented to himself in thought that which (was) above him, and did not keep the rank which had been fixed by him who created him. From there it is concerning him and concerning those who like him have been ill of the same change that a sacred word says somewhere: The angels who did not keep their principality, but abandoned their own dwelling, it is for the judgment of the great day, in eternal chains, in the midst of darkness, that he (has) reserved them (Jude 1:6). Indeed, they are reserved to fall into the final fire and into eternal chains, in the midst of darkness; for the (word): He has reserved, regards the future time, thus as Peter also wrote: As for the heavens of now and the earth, they are by his word those who are set aside—and placed as in a granary—being reserved for the fire, on the day of judgment and of the ruin of simple men (2 Pet 3:7). That is why also Our Lord, in the Gospels, by figuring and representing in advance the day of judgment, appears saying: Go away from me, cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the Calumniator and for his angels (Matt 25:41). Those, we (call) them also “demons”, not because evil natures were created by God, who made all things good (Gen 1:31), but because, themselves, of their own movement, they went away voluntarily towards an evil will, thus as the word has shown; and that is why, of their own will, they took upon themselves also the jealousy and the war which (is) against us. And yet they are vanquished, when God

permits the combat, so that those know themselves overwhelmed by the defeat for (their) pride and (for their) haughty spirit and (that), ourselves, we appear tested and chosen with the victory (won) against them.

Let no one therefore condemn the (fact) that the soul grows with the body. Indeed, by showing the sublimity of his wisdom, as one would say, God made man an admirable model, the same (being) rational and sensible; and, after having placed him in the midst of the visible creation and of the (creation) invisible, in that he draws near by the intelligence to those who (are) on high and by the body (L 300 r° b) to those who (are) below, he makes him pass entirely by the practice of the virtues towards those who (are) on high; for, with regard to the kind of life of those who have done good, consider the wisdom and the goodness of God and, with regard to the negligence of many, do not falsely make a blame to him who created. And indeed, it was not necessary that, because of those who were to sin and remove themselves from God by their folly, those who have done good not be brought into existence. For by the ones and the others is shown the goodness of him who made, and who made all men with the same honor, and not some of one nature, and others of another. That is why many, after having had from the beginning an evil will and having rolled in the desires, finally returned by a change to that which is better; and others did the contrary, and by the diversity of this conduct they have shown that the good God is not the cause of evils. Indeed, if the body, according to the word of the Manichaeans who are more impure than anyone, was that which pushes to sin, no one, because he would be bound with the flesh, would practice justice. For how did Joshua, son of Nun, with a tongue of flesh, command the luminaries which (are) in the heaven and stop the course of the moon and the sun, so that he set up the standard of victory in front of the enemies and that the night did not interrupt (his) victory? And I pass under silence the others who were similar to that one by virtue in the Old Testament and (in) the New.

After therefore that you have been yourselves catechized by these words and that you have believed in one God all-powerful, who is seen in one essence and divinity and in three hypostases, by standing and by turning towards the region of the west, renounce the darkness of the Manichaeans; that is there the Calumniator who, after having mounted above him who created him and having said according to the

prosopopoeia which (is) in Isaiah: It is above the stars of heaven that I will place my throne (Isa 14:13), and after having been precipitated from there, rises now by the tongues of the Manichaeans on the summit of this folly, by calling himself

Darkness without beginning and uncreated and by arraying himself in battle in front of God. And turn yourselves also towards the east; and it is by the very rays that Christ, the sun of justice, who cries clearly: I am the light of the world (John 8:12), will meet you, who in himself shows the Father and at the same time reveals the Holy Spirit; he, he will make you go down to the water and (will) make you take a bath as purification of all the ancient life, and he (will) lead you towards a new life, by burying the old age of sin in the waves—indeed, be buried with his burial—and by (you) clothing yourselves with the childhood of the spiritual stature and by (you) showing by that new instead of old. And that, he proclaimed it in advance clearly by the prophet Isaiah, by showing the greatness of the grace and of the gift, and he said: It is I, it is I who blot out your iniquity for my own sake, and of your sins I will not remember (Isa 43:25); and it is very well that he said the (word): For my own sake; for, wanting to say: “For your sake,” he is indignant and is embarrassed as one who has nothing to say, and he supplies even to our indigence, by saying: For my own sake; “I make,” he says, “that my grace be the cause of a gift. It is for that, indeed, that by the grace which befits God I tasted death for all the world and that I am resurrected, (it is) to grant such (benefits).” That is why Paul also said: It is not by virtue of works (operated) in justice that we would have done, but it is according to his mercy that he saved us by the bath of regeneration and (by) the renewal of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). And also the prophet Isaiah in his turn, by publishing and crying the greatness of the gift, expresses himself in these terms: Because of the Lord, the poor will exult in joy, and those who (are) without hope among men will be filled with joy (Isa 29:19). Listen to Paul who teaches what is (this) poverty and (what is this) lack of hope. You were at that time without Christ, being outside the life of Israel and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and (being) without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ (Eph 2:12-13). Christ also said for his part that which agrees with these (words), by speaking through Isaiah: And I will lead the blind by a way that they have not known, and it is by paths that they did not know that I will make them walk; I will make for them darkness light and that which is uneven that

which is straight. These words, I will accomplish them for them; and, them, I will not abandon them (Isa 42:16). You see the munificence of the gift of his riches (gift) which is put before your eyes. When you receive that, keep it; when you are blind, see; appear no more to be blinded by the darkness of sin; it is towards a straight way that you have been called; forget that which is tortuous, and remove from this your steps completely.

May the grace of baptism surround you on all sides, while it is an impregnable wall for the enemies. In truth, it was prefigured also by the staff of Moses which symbolized the cross; and he divided the Red Sea, so that the Sacred Book says: And the waters were for them a wall on the right, and a wall on the left (Ex 14:22). This one extended this staff on the waters symbolically; and, we, place it on them spiritually; that one also made gush the waters of the catechetical teaching and of the profession of a sound faith from my rock which is drier than all; and, after having been brought upon the Egyptian and idolatrous river of the Manichaean impiety, even if it is not upon all (the river), and (after having) struck it with the refutation, he changed into blood the river of mud, so that no one could drink from it. Let us flee therefore the impiety full of blood and murderous of the blasphemies, and let flee especially all those who are an easy prey among the women; and let us run towards Christ, the source of life. To him (be) the glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages of ages. So be it!

**SCHOLIA CONCERNING THE HONORABLE AND SECRET NAME, WHICH, AMONG THE HEBREWS, IS PRESENT IN THE HOLY BOOKS, WHICH HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED FROM GREEK INTO SYRIAC— WHICH IS SAID AMONG THE JEWS THE "SEPARATE NAME". TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Among the things that (exist) among men, which present themselves either in thought or in speech or in action for men to use, there is none in which the truth must be honored there more than the contrary. And, if in everything the truth is honorable and strong more than all, whether according to the testimony which (comes) from natural thoughts, or according to that which (comes) from the divine Book, for whatever reason and in whatever manner it is understood or named, necessarily it is to it that we must attach ourselves and it is from it that (we must) make use in all thought and (all) speech and (all) action, and particularly in the words of the Sacred Books, and still more preferably than those in the words which (are said) concerning God.

If, indeed, in the things of the world, it is more honorable and (more) beautiful to say or to do what exists and (is) true rather than what is not true and does not exist, it is most particularly honorable and beautiful to hold ourselves in the words of the Holy Books to what exists and (is) true, rejecting and despising what does not exist and is not true. And, if that is so, it must be that, also in the words and the names which are said or employed concerning God or about God in whatever manner, we pursue what is exact and true, as much as it is possible, and that it is not without examination that we receive from others every thing and consent (to it) or that we say to others every thing and transmit (it). Indeed, if, because of the usage of human language, which has been regulated and transmitted with the agreement of many and has been confirmed by usage and by a long space of time, it is not beautiful that we call wood by the name of stone, nor stone by the name of wood, nor animal plant, and not plant animal, nor bull horse, and not horse bull, nor heaven earth, or water fire, so as not to give false meanings by the names and by the words, but (so as) to call every thing by the particular name which has been imposed upon it beforehand, and (if) he who calls sweet what is bitter or bitter what is sweet, or (who) makes evil good and good evil (cf. Isaiah 5:20), incurs a curse in the divine Book, how is it not detestable and blameworthy that we

designate God, who is (more) honorable than all and (more) great than all and is himself the truth, by a false name and which does not exist at all and does not also (form part) of one of all the languages and tongues which (exist) among men, but (which) by a general usage of error (?), without examination, has slipped in, entered, been employed in the Holy Books and (which) has remained without inquiry and has been written until now.

Now that (name) is, so that what is my subject may be clearly shown, that which, in all the Holy Books of the Old Testament according to the version of the Septuagint, which from the Greek language have been transported into the language of the Syrians, is employed for the name of the Lord and is said (pipi) and by (which) God is designated by many ignorant ones, and (which) seems to them because of a great inexperience to be a Hebrew word and an honorable name, by which God is named among the learned and the ancients of the Hebrews. Now that (name) is truly a satanic and invented name, which, by a deceitful design of the Evil One, who wants and loves always to turn us away from all that is true and to make us take false roads and also false words and names, has entered (and) insinuated itself publicly without intelligence; and, behold, it is written and it presents itself in many manuscripts in many places. And many senseless ones bring to it their care and their predilection and their aid, and it is not easily that they let it be chased away and erased from the Books, because they say unconsciously that "it is by good and holy and learned men that it has been transmitted and written", not only Greeks who have passed the Holy Books into the Syriac language, but with them still other Syrians, who have received them from them, which "were very considered and proven", and (that) we must not despise what has been transmitted to us by them.

But, for those, it is so. As for me, I am convinced in my spirit that the holy souls of the men who have transmitted the (name) and employed it, after they have departed from what is true, even render me thanks truly for correcting their error; and I know that they regard me not as their adversary and not as (one) who accumulates reproaches against them, but, contrary to that, as (one) who removes from them many reproaches from now on and in the future. In applying myself to extirpate completely from the Books the deceitful name, it is very cheerfully and with an application entirely spontaneous that I have come to make this scholion

and to put it in the Books with other scholia and (with) meanings which are exposed there by certain men full of attention, for the profit of those who encounter them and read them.

But, before making known what is the honorable name among the Hebrews, and in what honor and (in what) respect they hold it, I want to show from where and how the error has occurred and (that) in place of the honorable and true name, which has come from among the Hebrews, has entered this false (name), and which (comes) from an invention without reason, and which has absolutely no signification or well (no) etymology from where it came. That if we want to create from ourselves and new names and words which are not usual and have not been heard and invent fictions which (come) from ourselves and employ them concerning natural things, we have therefore an occasion to make of every word, whatever it may be, which is formed and comes out by our lips, a name without examination and to employ it as a designation concerning a thing; however neither the nature of things demands it thus, nor also the usage and the agreement which is current among men. But, among the designations, we find that some exist among all peoples by virtue of an ancient usage and that they have no etymology (namely) of what and from where they are said, and that the others have an etymology and that by their signification they show of what they are called and principally in what concerns the language of the Greeks and also in what concerns the language of the Hebrews, because they call most of the things which (are) in this world according to certain operations which are found in them and according to properties which (exist) in them, so that, in addition to all things both visible and invisible which are designated by names, they also impose upon God, who is invisible and incomprehensible and without name and without designation, designations and names different in every people and (in every) language.

Behold, indeed, among the Greeks, the name of God, which is said θεός, has come from that he "runs" — and (it is) its etymology — or from that he "sees", or from that he "makes burn", because, if someone wants to take the trouble, he could also according to the divine Book give words which (would be) similar and would show the three (etymologies). Indeed, God is swift (cf. Gen. (LXX) 12:32), and who by running escapes the comprehension of the intelligences of men and of every created nature; (he is) a seer (cf. Job (LXX) 34:21) and an observer of all, of things

manifest and of things hidden (cf. Wisdom 7:21); and he can burn and destroy all evil matter, according to the (word) that God is a devouring and destructive fire (cf. Deut. 9:3).

Among the pagans, was not also called in a manner empty of sense, or (that) it is without etymology; for Ζεύς, in Greek, is "he who makes live", (a name) which, if it had not been abominable to Christians because of its usage and its cult which (is in honor) among the pagans, we would not refuse to employ, we also, concerning the God of the universe, the (God) true and (who is) without name; for, we, we profess — and (it is) true for us — that, he, he is the one who makes the universe live and that there is no other who makes live, if not himself; in him, indeed, we live and we move and we exist (Acts 17:28), as it is written.

Now it is said that the (name) which (exists) among the Hebrews, which is said Elohim, is translated by "author", so that, knowing that, he, he is the author of the universe, these Hebrews esteem according to the true name that he is that one. Similarly, we also Aramaeans, that is to say Syrians, because of (our) neighborhood and our proximity in relation to them and of our language in relation to their language, we have imitated the name which (comes) from among them and we have called "Aloho" the author of the universe. And in the same manner, in their turn also the Tayoyè, that is to say the Arabs, their neighbors (have called him "Allah"). Thus it is known by that that, even if we call different things by the names which do not have a known etymology, however, concerning God, the master of the universe, we do not do that, because he does not have a name which indicates his nature.

But all the names and designations that we employ concerning him, it is according to the operations which (exist) in him that we say them; for we call him author and creator and he who makes live and he who takes care and he who helps and he who fortifies, and many other appellations of this kind, and master and king and almighty, and other (appellations) of this kind which form part of those which (exist) among us. But, that God be called "Pipi", (it is) an invented and unknown name; and neither the Holy Books have taught it to us, nor the learned of the Hebrews or the ancients of the Syrians have transmitted it to us, nor the rhetors and the writers of the Greeks nor the doctors and the chiefs of the Church who were

our pastors and (our) guides towards the truth. But, as I have said previously, it is by a deception of Satan that it has entered (and) found itself publicly. And how? — Immediately, according as it is possible, I say clearly the cause, which is thus. Among the peoples who have found themselves scriptures, when they have made and created for themselves characters of letters, some, in writing, extend their lines from left to right, and others, on the contrary, from right to left. Those who write from left to right, who are known to us, are therefore the Greeks and the Latins and the Egyptians and the Armenians; and those who write from right to left are the Hebrews and the Syrians and the Tayoyè and the Persians.

When therefore they were translating the Sacred Books from the Hebrew language into Greek, the seventy-two learned Hebrews, who were called by Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Alexandria and of Egypt, and received the order to do that, in passing the Hebrew words into the Greek language and in writing them, once translated, with the writing and (with) the letters of the language of the Greeks, when they saw the name of the Lord God which was written there and (which) was among them honorable and very respectable and redoubtable and terrible, they were moved and frightened and were afraid to translate it and to make pass the word of its translation into another language. Indeed, they said: "If our ancient scribes, learned and pious, have honored this terrible name of God and have made for us a secret and special name among all the names which (are employed) concerning God and that they have commanded and transmitted to us to write it with letters at the same time as every thing and not to pronounce it with our lips or not to make it heard by a word, but, while writing it with its own signs, to say in its place the name of Adonai, which is translated "Lord", we must not translate it and put its translation into another language, but (we must) leave it such as it is in its hidden state, without being translated. And with that we judge that it is fitting not to write it with other characters and with foreign letters outside of those with which it is written, but to leave it in its honor and with the characters of the Hebrew letters with which our ancient learned have written and put it, and not to write it with the letters and with the characters of the signs of the writing of the Greeks or of another people."

After therefore the men who have translated have thought that with intelligence and with wisdom concerning the honorable and secret name of God which (exists)

among them, they have been necessarily forced, in writing, to put it frequently in the lines of the Greek letters, everywhere where it presented itself in the words of the divine Books, in writing it, as it has been said previously, with its Hebrew signs, and to write outside of the pages, opposite it, everywhere where it is put, to enlighten the reader, the name of Κύριος, that is to say "Lord". And, after that has taken place and that the honorable name had been written with its Hebrew signs inside the lines of the Greek signs, it is orally that then these scribes taught and transmitted to whoever read among the Greeks that, everywhere where they see the (name) written in the Greek readings, they say in its place "Lord" and that they not be embarrassed in their reading. But, after a long space of time had passed and that certain friends of reading had put their care to read all that is written, when they saw the honorable name which is written in the Greek lines, they thought concerning the letters of the name that they are Greek also, with all the letters which are put in the Books. Indeed, to deceive, it has also been found that they have in their characters resemblance with the signs which (exist) among the Greeks, I mean (with) that of "iota" and of "pi", so that, when they are regarded as Greek and seem to them to be "pi" and "iota" and (when they have found themselves put twice in the word and to be arranged one after the other twice and to resemble "pi", "iota", "pi" "iota" or well, to speak according to the writing of the Syrians, "pê", "yôdh", "pê", "yôdh", they think necessarily that the honorable name is (pipi).

And with that there happened still another error (namely) that, given that the name was written and arranged with its Hebrew letters beginning from the right and extending towards the left, they read it, they, in the inverse order, from its end until its beginning, that is to say from the left towards the right, in the manner of the disposition of the Greek writing, so that the first sign seems to them the last, and the last the first; because of the contrary disposition of the arrangement of the signs of the two writings of the Greeks and of the Hebrews. And, on the one hand, the cause which has produced the error consists in this, because these translators have put the Hebrew name which (is written) with Hebrew signs in the middle of Greek words, and because there has been found a resemblance in these signs with those of the Greeks, and for that other (reason) that the writings have been found to have contrary dispositions, because the one reads from left to right and the other from right to left. And, on the other hand, that the translators have put the Hebrew and

honorable name inside the lines of the Greek language, and that they have not translated it, and that they have not put it outside, let no one be astonished. Behold, indeed, we see that those who have translated the laws of the Romans and have passed them into the language of the Greeks, after having left there many names of those of the Latin language, which enclose secretly and profoundly the sense of the laws, and not having wanted to translate them, so that it is not for everyone that the laws and the names are known and that it is not who wants, who can change something of his own will in the books which are written and falsify them, have not written with Greek signs these names which they have left and have not translated, but have written them with the signs of the Latin writing. And also the contemporaries, who write documents of purchases and of dowries in the Greek language according to the books of the laws, write similarly these Latin names inside the (Greek) language and of the Greek writing with the Latin letters, with which they were written also among the Romans, so that, if those have thus honored the laws of the Romans in (their) hidden state and with their signs, it is very fittingly and (very) wisely that the Hebrew translators have acted, who have honored the honorable and secret name of God who is above all (cf. Rom. 9:5) in (its) hidden state and with their signs, and have not translated it.

For a fuller explanation, I put in addition still this (namely) that all those who have translated the Holy Books from the Hebrew language into Greek, having regard to this name, put it, while some, in the resemblance of the Septuagint, have preserved for it all its honor, without having translated it at all, and have not changed the characters of the Hebrew letters, with which it was written, and that others, although they have not preserved for it the Hebrew characters, with which it was written, have however put and transmitted in the context of the Greek Books the Hebrew name, which the Hebrews said in place of the (name) honorable, that is to say that of Adonai, without having dared to translate it and put the word of its translation into the Greek language or to translate even that of Adonai which is put in its place and put Κύριος, that is to say "Lord", inside the context of the Book; but, as I have said previously, they put the (name) of Adonai inside, in the context of the Book, and they put that of Lord opposite it, outside, in the margin of the pages of the Book.

That is why, when Lucian, the holy friend of work and martyr, also brought (his) application to the Holy Books and corrected here and there or even changed some of the words which the translators who (had) preceded him had put, when he saw that the name of Adonai was put inside and that the name of Lord was put outside, it is after having himself joined and put together the two (names) that he has transmitted them himself in the Testament which he has left after him, so that it is found written there in many places: "Thus says Adonai the Lord", the name of Adonai, which is Hebrew, being written itself also with Greek signs and that of Lord being put together, near it, immediately and the two, so to speak, being said as one single name, while those who read say, as I have said: "Adonai the Lord has said these things", and: "Adonai the Lord has ordered", and: "Adonai the Lord has made", or: "He has said", or: "He has made such or such thing". And it is thus that the Septuagint, and it is thus that the other translators have transmitted this honorable name. Now therefore that have been known manifestly both the cause of the denomination and the cause for which an error has taken place and that the (name) has been changed and that in place of the honorable and respectable name there has come to us a false name and which signifies nothing, we will say manifestly and clearly what is itself the true name and what are its signs which (exist) among the Hebrews, which because of the resemblance of their characters have passed among the Greeks for being Greek and which they have called "pi" and "iota".

This honorable name therefore is that which was given by God, when he was questioned by Moses and (that one) said to him: When the children of Israel say to me: What is the name of the one who has sent you? what shall I say to them? And God said to Moses — so that I cite the very words of the Book said by the Spirit — I am that I am. And he said: Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: I AM hath sent me unto you (Exodus 3:14). And, among the Greeks and among us, it is thus that is the very name and that it is put; but, among the Hebrews, it is in proper term: I, I am Yehyeh; Yehyeh has sent me unto you. And it is translated in our language (of us) Aramaeans, that is to say Syrians, by "the being". It is thus, indeed, that we find that our holy Syriac doctors also, mar Ephrem and mar James and mar Isaac and mar Philoxenus, call God constantly, saying "the great being", "the hidden being". Similarly, we find that the holy Greek doctors also judge good to employ properly concerning God that name principally, in preference to the

other names. And the signs of the name, as they have been known also by the name, are "yôdh" and "hé", which, given that it is twice that the same are put one after the other, compose by their reading this honorable name of God which (exists) among the Hebrews, which is said "Yehyeh" and is called "separate name" even now among the decided Jews who remain in the country, using it very frequently also in oaths, that is to say "secret name", when, on the one hand, they say "separate name" and that they do not fear, and that, on the other hand, they do not say at all Yehyeh or that they do not pronounce (it) with their lips, having regard and having fear even of the hearing of the honorable and hidden name, if in truth it is from fear, and not a semblance of hypocritical fear.

And, so that what has been said may be more known and (that it be clear) how has taken place the change of the signs with the Greek signs and (that) may appear also the resemblance of the ones in relation to the others, behold, I put the two names one near the other, the true and the false, with the Hebrew and Greek signs, putting near them, for the explanation, the same names also with the letters of this writing of the Syrians, with which I have written also this scholion which (is) under the hands (and) writing, besides all that, for a fuller explanation, also a verse taken from David, where there is this honorable name of Lord, which is: "The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand" (Psalm 110:1). In this verse therefore, the one who has spoken is called by the honorable name of Yehyeh, and the one to whom it has been said is written by the name of Adonai, and not by the (name) honorable; said among the Hebrews the two (names), with the pronunciation of the word Adonai, that is to say "Lord". And these things become clear from the drawing which (is) below.

The false name : ΠΙΠΠ
In Syriac: ܝܗܘܐ
In Greek: ΠΙΠΠ

The true name : IEHIEH
In Syriac: ܐܗܝܐ

**HOMILY 124 ON THE VERSE FOUND IN MATTHEW: "WHO DO MEN SAY THAT I, THE SON OF MAN, AM?" AND ON THE REST. AND THAT THE ORTHODOXY OF THE FAITH MUST BE CHARACTERIZED AND TESTED, NOT BY PLACES OR BY AUTHORITIES, BUT BY A SOUND AND APOSTOLIC CONFESSION.** TABLE OF CONTENTS

God, who made all things by the Word and by the supreme and ineffable Wisdom, because the greatness and beauty of each of His works and the orderly and harmonious movement they maintain in relation to one another make known that He is the author of this universe—for, though silent, the works themselves proclaim the action, the ordering, the sustaining of Him who acted, who ordered, who sustains—(God, I say) also often uses questions when, as if awakening us who are asleep, He pricks us by His words as with goads and asks us to consider in our understanding the creatures and the well-ordered state of the world; and it is by this that we rise to the thought of Him who created. Therefore, it is through the prophet Isaiah that, speaking as to children and, so to speak, drawing us to His knowledge even when we do not want it—for He desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4)—He asks: "Who has measured the waters with His hand, and marked off the heavens with His span and the whole earth with His fist?" (Isa 40:12). And again: "To whom have you likened the Lord, and to what likeness have you compared Him?" (Isa 40:18). And again: "Will you not know? Will you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood the foundations of the earth?" (It is) He who sustains the circle of the earth and those who dwell in it like grasshoppers, who set the heavens like a vault and stretched them out like a tent to dwell in (Isa 40:21-22). And He seems likewise to question Job in this manner, not however as an unbeliever and a fool, but as one who ought to know the smallness of human understanding and who lacks divine knowledge utterly and greatly: "And I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare to Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements, if you know?" (Job 38:3-5). And in Jeremiah also (He questions) similarly: "Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord" (Jer 23:24).

Likewise in the Gospels also, Jesus, the Son, the Word, God of God, Light of Light, through whom all things were made (John 1:3), although actions and

wonders worthy of God proclaimed that He was true God, sometimes also used words; (addressing) the Jews, on the one hand, (He used words) which covered them with confusion as blasphemers and envious and shameless, sometimes showing humility and economy in these (terms): “The very works that I do bear witness of Me that the Father has sent Me” (John 5:36), and sometimes clearly showing equality with the Father and non-difference in anything in these (terms): “If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him” (John 10:37-38); (addressing) the disciples, on the other hand, (He used words) in the form of question and dispute, and (this) while He knew what they thought and what they were going to say, and He placed the whole reality in their answer, so that they might remember their own belief and what was confessed by them and have their own words written within them, and at the same time both by making them grasp and understand well through this, and by urging them not to look superficially and externally at what He says or does, but to awaken their intelligence very deeply, and by giving teachers as a model of first-rate teaching the (fact) of waiting and waiting (again) for the opinions of the disciples and not declaring themselves magnificent, and furthermore by emphasizing this, (namely) that the good actions of the best disciples must be made public to others, so that, when a grace or prerogative attaches to those whom a word of the teachers distinguishes more, the others may know that this has been granted and given not by passion or favor, but rather by a right judgment that honors what is just. For, if it was not after Peter answered the God-inspired word: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16), that spontaneously, without cause, were proclaimed the (word): “You are blessed, Simon Bar-Jona” (Matt 16:17), and the (word): “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church” (Matt 16:18), necessarily the disciples would be gnawed by the passion of jealousy. And indeed, as they had very imperfect dispositions from the beginning, they were subject to such human passions and each of them desired the (honors) of priority; that is why they even asked the question: “Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Matt 18:1). Indeed, someone will be very astonished at this, given the divine and perfect character of our Savior’s teaching, (namely) that, when the disciples were such, somewhat uneducated, He showed them as such statues of perfection and (that) He proposed them to the whole earth as models of philosophy.

But let us come to that question which (Jesus) asked them, after coming to Caesarea called after Philip—for different is the one called (Caesarea) of Straton, although it is the homonym of that one.—And consider how the question itself is a masterly teaching and that it addresses them as perfect (interlocutors) and (that) it digs by means of expressions and (that) it seeks to produce a perfect answer in public. For (Jesus) said: "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" (Matt 16:13). He uses His lowly name, and He did not say: "Who do they say I am?", and He did not stop at the question; but He added: "the Son of Man" (Matt 16:13), which is humble and low and very suitable for the degrees of voluntary emptying. And although He could say: "He who walked on the sea, He who rebuked the winds and by His mere command calmed the fury of the storm, He who healed, as He willed, the mutilation of all kinds of limbs and the different kinds of diseases", as He also seems to say through the prophets: "Will you not fear Me, who set the sand as a boundary for the sea—an eternal command—and it will not cross it?" (cf. Jer 5:22), yet He does not say that, and He makes the question humble, asking for an answer worthy of God and admirable, to show clearly that He who is seen and became man truly and without change, the same is also true God, without being in any way partially cut off and separately into God and man, since He is one and indivisible. But, even if someone calls Him Son of Man, he will not remove Him from the (fact) that the same is also the Son of God.

What then do (the disciples) answer to this question?—They said first who men say He is; for on that they were also questioned. They were so instructed that they give answers suitable to the questions and not filled with superfluities. And they said further: "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets" (Matt 16:14). And in turn the wise master of intelligent disciples did not startle, or become indignant at this, and He did not say: "Go away", because of the different and false opinion of many. But He waits and waits (again) for their word, and He questions again and says: "But who do you say that I am?" (Matt 16:15). And, when Simon Peter answered, he said: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:16). "You," he says, "have condensed the question into a few (words), and you ask: 'Who do we think You are, the Son of Man?' For me, it is because of the humility and because of the economy of Your question that I rise to the height; and, reflecting that, given who You are by nature, You

descended to such humiliation because of the economy, I confess above all that You are the Son of the living God."

And see the precision of Peter, who confirms his master's question; for he did not say: "You are the Son of the living God", but: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:16). "Indeed," he says, "because You became the Son of Man for our salvation, that is why You are the Christ; for You are anointed according to the economy in the Holy Spirit and in power by God and Father, without You needing the anointing. For You are the Son of the living God, and You possess the Spirit in Yourself by essence and give to others participation in Him, and You are anointed, not for Yourself, but truly for us, so that, after being as the firstfruits of our race, You might transmit to us the grace of the anointing and participation in the Holy Spirit. For how would He who is the Son of the living God need the anointing or to participate in the Spirit, who is His own by nature and from whom He gives grace to others?" It is to this precise and God-worthy confession of Peter that Jesus replies: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matt 16:17). And why did Peter alone receive this beatitude, and that when Nathanael had previously made the same confession and said clearly: "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel" (John 1:49)?—It is because, according to the expressions and according the thought of those who made the confession, there is a difference to be learned. For the (fact) that (Nathanael) said: "Rabbi", which is "Master", and (that) he continued afterwards: "You are the King of Israel" (John 1:49), shows the human side and the lowliness, which vies with the earth, of the thought of him who said the (word) and who thought nothing divine about Jesus, but called Him Son of God as a certain Master, and king of Israel who is king of the kingdom that is on earth, according to the (word): "I said, 'You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High'" (Ps 82:6).

But Peter entered the secret sanctuary of theology, after being transported in his soul and raised up by a revelation of the Father in heaven. And first he said: "You are the Christ" (Matt 16:16), and not: "You are a Christ", like one of those Christs of old, who were symbolically anointed with oil, or like one of the kings or prophets, whom God sanctified and set apart according to what is said in the Psalms: "Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm" (Ps

105:15), (and) as what is found in Habakkuk: “You went forth for the salvation of Your people, to save Your anointed ones” (Hab 3:13). For the (fact) of saying demonstratively with the article, that is “the”: “You are the Christ” makes known the property and non-community with the others: “You are the Christ” (Matt 16:16), the unique (Christ), the special and distinct (Christ), who was awaited, who was foretold and proclaimed in advance by the prophets, to whom and about whom David said: “You who sit upon the cherubim, show Yourself” (Ps 80:1); and: “God shall come manifestly, our God, and shall not keep silence” (Ps 50:3). Then, after the (word): “You are the Christ” (Matt 16:16), he also added the (word): “the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16), not simply the Son of God by grace, but of the (God) living, as the Life who (is) from Life, as the Light who (is) from Light, as God who (is) from God; for it is with a theology that is very elevated that the (fact) that (Christ) is confessed the Son of the living God is filled. And indeed, he who considers the Son, the living and subsistent image of Him who begot Him, knows clearly that He is begotten by Him who is perpetually living and subsisting—and it is certain that (it is) by the Father—and (that) He is the Son of the living God. And yet, O Peter, you were asked to say: “Who do you think the Son of Man is?” And how, flying, did you rise to theology? But he will say: “(It is) very rightly, because I treat theologically this Son of Man, knowing that the same is the Son of God, who is not divided by the duality of natures after the ineffable union. For although He was incarnate of the Virgin the Mother of God, (taking) flesh consubstantial with us, which has an intellectual soul, yet He did not depart from being God. For it is one, without diminution and without change, that Emmanuel is seen as two, namely of divinity and humanity, one person, one hypostasis, one incarnate nature of the Word God.”

It is for this precise confession, and not in a general way, that Peter received this beatitude, when he heard: “Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah; for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Matt 16:17), so that, if anyone confesses Christ in the same way that Peter confessed Him, that one, removing the veil of flesh that (he has) on the heart, attaches himself to the revelation of the Father in heaven. But, if anyone divides Him into two natures, or if he regards as an imagination the true incarnation which (is) from us and the inhumanation, or if he alters otherwise, in any way, the mystery concerning Him, that one says nothing from above, but treats the whole reality according to flesh

and blood. And it is very well and fitting here that Christ cried out to Peter the (word): “Bar-Jona” (Matt 16:17), which is “son of Jonah”, and that although He did not always speak to him in this manner. For because that one said to Him that He is the Son of the living God, He also called him “son of Jonah”, showing clearly by this and, so to speak, saying: “I am thus the true Son of God and Father and who shares with Him the same nature and (is) consubstantial with Him, in the same way that you, Peter, are the true son of Jonah and (that) you are not of another nature, that is essence, except that which the father who begot you also is. For it is to those who begot them that the children themselves are necessarily consubstantial.”

Let the followers of Arius, hearing these (words), be covered with confusion by this also and let them not think that it belongs to a servant and an inferior that the Son says: “Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matt 11:27). They think in ignorance that (the act of revealing) belongs to a service and a ministry and an inferior condition. Behold, indeed, that the Father also reveals to the Son, as the Son Himself says: “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Matt 16:17). Likewise Paul also, writing to the Galatians, said: “But when God, who set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me” (Gal 1:15-16). Does the (act of) “revelation” show that it belongs to equality of honor or to an abasement?

Matthew therefore wrote that Peter confessed: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16). John comes in the same terms, even if it is to another question of our Savior that (Peter) says thus: “Jesus then said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God’” (John 6:67-69). Luke, in concise terms and with a thought (that is) not different, wrote that to the same question Peter answered thus: “And He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ And Peter answered, ‘The Christ of God’” (Luke 9:20). Mark reported in the same manner as Luke: “When Peter answered, he said to Him, ‘You are the Christ’” (Mark 8:29). Now these (accounts) are not contradictory. But there is

contradiction when by what one has written is refuted what was written by the other, when one, if it occurs, has written: “This thing happened, or it was said by our Savior Christ”, and the other has related: “This thing did not happen, and it was not said”, or else: “It happened in a contrary way, or it was said, and not as the other wrote.” As for the (fact) that they relate the same thing, one with more development, and the other with more conciseness, it does not belong to contradiction, but to an account that is either more complete or has more gaps. For it is not similarly and in the same terms that we all are capable of relating the same things; but, although there (is only) one account, one relates in a tighter and (more) concise manner, and the other with more abundance; and often what was omitted by one was added by the other; and what was added is a confirmation of what was said, and not a refutation; for someone adds to what is true what belongs to the same thought; and indeed, if he knew what was said to be false, he would not complete it, but would refute and nullify it. And because of this, therefore, it is according to this manner that precedes that all the evangelists agree together, when they said that Peter said: “You are the Christ” (Matt 16:16; Mark 8:29; cf. Luke 9:20; John 6:69), although these two (Matthew and John) only added the (word): “the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16; cf. John 6:69). And indeed it is not without an action of God that they did this (namely) that some say it and others do not say it. For by what they said we learned the perfection of the confession, by what they did not say—but the (word): “You are the Christ” sufficed for them—they set before us another teaching that is similarly complete and useful, teaching that, even if someone confesses Him only as the Christ, he did not answer in a restrictive way for he made known that the Son of the living God was incarnate and became man.

Therefore, when Saint Cyril addressed very wisely the impious Nestorius, who divided and cut the name of Christ, in the third book (of chapters) against his blasphemies, he expresses himself thus: “When we hear that Christ was born of the holy Virgin, then certainly, then we say, and (that) very wisely and taking care to walk in the orthodoxy of the truth, that the Word who is born of God the Father became man and was united to the flesh hypostatically and also that He was born according to the flesh, and we do not submit to your chatter on this point; and it is to the unique and only, to the Son who (is) by nature, that we give as is fitting this name of Christ.” And after other (words), (he says) again: “For us, after the union,

even if someone names God the Word, it is not outside His flesh that we understand Him; even if he says Christ, we recognize the Word who became incarnate." And thus (spoke) this preacher of the truth, who walks in the footsteps of the God-inspired Book. But Romanos, who carries on his shoulders the impious "Ladder" like a thief in the night, so as not to enter by the gate of the courtyard where the shepherds enter, but to climb up another way (cf. John 10:1), wanting to plunder the sound meaning of the sacred words, said that the account of the evangelists, (which is) profitable and at once different and concordant, (account) which they made concerning the confession of Peter, is an image and a model of the false opinion of the heretics, (which is) varied, (and that) in these (terms): "But the orthodox faith of the apostles was going to be altered with the circumstances by the new impure language of those who have false opinions. That is why the evangelists, rising by a prophetic spirit, both describe the variation of the circumstances and make known the change of those who become disciples. And moreover they also predict the evil opinions of those who after them seize by force the honor of precedence, by whom the iniquity of the heretics will multiply and the charity of the apostles will grow cold (cf. Matt 24:12)."

And, tell me, who would submit to this blasphemy and dare to say that the evangelists first suffered a variation and a change and a varied division, in order to prefigure that of the heretics? And how do you say above: "But would anyone dare to say that the image of the truth alters and varies and that the evangelists themselves are divided and do not agree with themselves? Far from it!" And what is more shameful and more impudent than this division, so that (the evangelists) themselves are images and models of the very divided error of the heretics and that because of this they are varied? For it is clearly that both the evangelists and the apostles predicted the heresies that were to take place, warning in advance those who became disciples of the word of truth, as Paul says, writing to the Corinthians: "For there must be heresies among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you" (1 Cor 11:19). And it is not these preachers of the truth who were first, as you say, models of variation and change, when they wrote differently. For that is nothing else, if not that they themselves fall under an accusation of division and disagreement and (that they present in advance a defense for the heresies. For they will say: "We have done this (namely) what we received; and it is not something important if we have been divided, since those

who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word (cf. Luke 1:2) suffered this before us." However, none of those who explained the Gospel ever said that the evangelists varied and changed; but all showed that even these (accounts) that seem to differ agree in a capital way. For Porphyry and Julian, the atheists who reasoned madly against the truth, were preoccupied with showing the evangelists as varied and different men who do not agree with one another; and yet they were reproved by the Truth, who, after the confession that was revealed by the Father in heaven, said to Peter: "You are a rock, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). And He calls "rock" the unshakable confession of the faith that Peter made well. Consequently those who are built on this rock and (who) have received for instruction and teaching this orthodox confession are also said to be the Church properly speaking; but, when the rock does not have sound dispositions, it is necessary that it itself also falsify the name of Church. But the word of Our Lord is truly a great wall for the Church, which confirms its appellation. And indeed, He did not say: "And violence and war will not prevail against it", but: "And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). And what is that? The pagans, that is the ministers of demons, and, after them, the Arians and those who were sick with the same (sicknesses) as these persecuted it and maltreated it and humiliated it with such violence that it seemed swallowed up and lost and arrived at the very gates of Hades; but it rose again however and raised its head as if out of the waves and the lower depths. For the word of God, who said: "And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18), raised it up, so therefore that we must not be discouraged in the face of the duration and length of trials; but, if it is for the orthodox faith and for the rock that we have walked, let us have confidence and hope firmly in Him who said: "And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18).

To those who stand at the head of such a Church, which is founded on a sound faith, He gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven as to Peter, and these are the words of the priests who adhere to the faith of Peter, those that bind and loose; for it is with these that He too, a sign of the God of heaven, pronounces the sentence; but the words of those who stand outside the rock spread in the air and they accomplish nothing. That is why Balaam said: "Why should I curse whom the Lord has not cursed, and why should I denounce whom the Lord has not denounced?" (Num 23:8). Where are those who occupy the sensible and visible Jerusalem?—

But they have fallen from the rock and from the sound faith; and they think to launch vain anathemas at those who have orthodox thoughts, and they read the book of the abominable Theodoret, whom Saint Cyril said was the supreme imitator of the impiety of Nestorius, and they have cut out and suppressed from the doxology of the Trisagion the (addition): “You were crucified for us”, and they have shown why they placed among the sacred volumes the infamous and impure council that (was held) at Chalcedon. How could they still even call themselves Christians, proudly circulating the august name of the holy places that were once occupied also by the promoters of the madness of Arius, after having pursued their bishop, old and orthodox, Cyril, when the pious fugitive was going to the city of Tarsus? Were they not then worthy of confusion, those who on the one hand practiced Arianism, and on the other hand said (that), because they occupied the places of Christ, they also held the faith of Christ? And could they, gurgling loudly with their throat, as now you yourselves, O good ones, say the (word): “For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa 2:3). Read the prophecies, and know who you are as zealots. And indeed, formerly, when those stood outside the Law that was given by Moses and outside the commandments of God and when, while the prophecies corrected them and threatened them, they did not hear, but took pride in Jerusalem and the temple of God, the prophet Jeremiah reproached them for having a vain pride, saying: “Do not trust in yourselves or in lying words, for they will not profit you at all, you who say, ‘The temple of the Lord! The temple of the Lord!’” (Jer 7:4). And again: “Why, O beloved, have you committed defilement in My house?” (cf. Jer 11:15). And again: “I have forsaken My house, I have abandoned My heritage” (Jer 12:7). Because of this, he too, the prophet, while he was in sorrow, said lamenting: “Who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem, or who will grieve for you, or who will turn back to ask about your peace? You have turned your face from Me, says the Lord” (Jer 15:5-6). Therefore, we too will not ask peace with this (Jerusalem), after by heretical opinions she has turned her face from the Lord. That is why it is not surprising if, having such impious dispositions, they thought it good to anathematize those who profess orthodoxy. And indeed, they also condemned Jeremiah, saying: “A sentence of death for this man, because he has prophesied against this city” (Jer 26:11). Thus it was necessary for them, having these heretical thoughts, not to boast and glorify themselves about the places, but to bear condemnations for those who, committing impiety, dishonor the holy places,

preventing the faithful from venerating them. For who is he who, having intelligence, will choose for himself to meet, because of venerable places, impious men, when the word of the Lord says: “Separate yourselves from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sin” (Num 16:26)? We must, indeed, look to the sound faith alone and put ourselves in order with it and, according to the law of the Apostle, “lift up holy hands in every place” (1 Tim 2:8), and say with David: “In every place of His dominion, bless the Lord, O my soul” (Ps 103:22). Otherwise, we too had powerful subjects for boasting, the first see of the chief of the apostles, the great name, the (name) new that was blessed on the earth, that of the Christians which began from here. But these are only proud and haughty chatter, if we do not occupy the rock, but only the see. May it happen that we stand firmly on the rock and that we put our trust not in the sophisms of men, but in the word of the cross, and, as Paul says: “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal 6:14)! To Him be glory and power, with the holy Father in all things and the life-giving and consubstantial Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

## HOMILY 125 ON (THE DOXOLOGY): "HOLY GOD, HOLY MIGHTY, HOLY IMMORTAL, YOU WHO WERE CRUCIFIED FOR US, HAVE MERCY ON US." TABLE OF CONTENTS

The great Paul, the Apostle, who was called by heaven after all the apostles, and who received the ministry of the Gospel in such a true manner, and who labored so toilsomely, or rather so boldly, in it that he even says: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18), and who made so little of anything he might suffer for piety, and who so opened the mouth of his thought and drew in the Spirit (cf. Psalm 119:131), and who so abundantly drank from the stream that comes from above, from the source of life, that, according to the true promise of our Savior, rivers of living water would flow from his belly (John 7:38)—now the belly is the generative power of thought, which gives birth and widely spreads the meanings that come from divine action like streams of drinkable water; that is why, indeed, he even made his own the common name of the apostles; and, if someone uses the name apostle in an indeterminate way, it is Paul, and not another, that the listeners imagine; for by the frequency and great number of struggles, combats, teachings, the double race, namely of feet and of word, by which he ran toward everything under the sun in general, he gathers in himself all the glory of the apostleship, being a true image and presenting a complete and perfect figure of the facts—he therefore, the preacher of piety who is such and so great, knowing how important the fact of faith is and what care and very eager protection it needs, said to those who have believed: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5). We must therefore both believe and examine our soul and test our thought as in a furnace and distinguish what is dross and what is pure and not mixed with foreign element, so that we may believe in a tested manner and not be rejected.

Therefore, speaking to you a short while ago and explaining, as far as I was able, the confession of faith made by Peter, the first chief of the apostles and disciples, when he said to Our Lord Jesus: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16), and I set before you the firmness of orthodox thought, and I rejected that which is false and showed it foreign to the confession of the Apostle,

and I brought forth publicly this mention, if I must say what is very true, when I presented at the same time also the peroration, that those in Palestine impiously wanted to remove from the doxology of the Trisagion the (addition): “You have been crucified for us”; and they dared (this); and, from some, they were not listened to favorably, but they were fought by controversy—for the habit of truth triumphed over the blasphemy of audacity—and, in some places, they even prevailed by the audacity of impiety. However, so that I may not seem only to accuse those who have reached this degree of audacity and foolishness and not show how this praise possesses what is perfect, when it is with the (addition): “You have been crucified for us” that it is sung to our Savior Christ—for I have heard some ask why we blame the suppression—these are some of the (arguments) that I previously took pains to oppose to the impious Macedonius, who was sick with the same malady and contagion as those and who had this audacity, while I was staying in the imperial city, that I will try to expound now on this present (subject).

All those who have orthodox thoughts profess together in one spirit and with a unanimous tongue that the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, are three distinct hypostases and not confused into one essence. Now it is good that presently I explain to you opportunely what essence is and what hypostasis is; for thus especially will be clearly shown what is before us. We say therefore that essence and hypostasis are words that indicate the existence of things that exist. Indeed, essence makes known that the subject exists, and hypostasis that it subsists; that is why they also derive their name from the name of action, essence from “to be,” and hypostasis from “to subsist”; and in this they do not differ at all from one another, and in this great is the difference of the two; for essence indicates community, and hypostasis property.

But the notion must be explained by a suitable example. The word “man” indicates community—and (this) as essence—according to what is written: “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psalm 144:3). And again: “Man is like to vanity” (Psalm 144:4). For here it is not one man, but all men, that the designation encompasses, and it shows in a general way the equality of honor and the identity of being of the whole (human) kind. For such a one is not particularly more rational than such a one, or particularly more mortal than such a one; for every man is a rational and mortal animal; and in this we do

not differ at all from one another, but we are all the same. But, when we say Peter or Paul, necessarily the listener will grasp in his understanding a man, and not every man, but such a one or such a one; and it is by the properties that appear for each that he will make known the one indicated. For different is the property of Peter, for example: that he is from the small town of Bethsaida, and son of Jonah, and brother of Andrew, and fisherman by trade, and after that apostle, and who because of the orthodoxy and firmness of his faith was again called "rock" by Christ; and different in turn is the property of Paul: that he is from Cilicia, that he was a Pharisee, that he was instructed and learned the Law of (his) fathers at the feet of Gamaliel, that, after having persecuted, he preached the Gospel, that he was called Paul instead of Saul, and all the other (facts) that are recorded about him in history. The hypostasis therefore, on the one hand, does not deny the identity of the (human) kind and of existence, and it does not reduce it to nothing either; on the other hand, it distinguishes and defines the subject by proper characteristics. For, on one side, it is by existence and by the (human) kind that Peter is man, just as Paul also is; on another side, it is by property that he is distinct from Paul; and Peter will not be regarded as Paul, nor will Paul ever be forced to change into Peter.

The same thing must be said also concerning the Holy Trinity. There also, indeed, essence is divinity; for the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; and one of them is not more God than another because of the identity and equality of honor of the essence. As for hypostasis, one is that of the Father, and another that of the Son, and another that of the Spirit; but each of them is indicated by a proper characteristic. For the property of the Father, so to speak, is paternity, that is, not to be begotten by anything, but to exist without generation; and the property of the Son is to be begotten by the Father, although without time and eternally; and the property of the Holy Spirit is to proceed from the Father eternally; for it is written in the Gospels: "The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father" (John 15:26). Neither is the Father the Son or the Holy Spirit, nor will the Son pass by changing to be the Spirit or the Father, nor will the Holy Spirit ever change by passing to the property of the Son or of the Father. For the properties remain immovable and unchangeable, characterizing without confusion each of the hypostases and not dividing the community of the essence. For one is the divinity of the three hypostases, and not only the divinity, but also the praise, and also the

kingship and the power and all the other (attributes) that belong to God. For the Son is all that the Father is, except this only that He is Father; and similarly the Holy Spirit also has by essence what by nature is in the Father and in the Son, except the quality of Father and the quality of Son. For it is not only in hypostasis, but also in will and in power and in time and in place that Peter and Paul, and every man, are divided, inasmuch as they are created and subject to change by nature; but the Holy Trinity is without change in all things, except that it is separated in the hypostases. And we do not incur blame, as if we professed three principles, because the Son and the Spirit assign the Father as principle as cause and they go back to Him; for it is by Him that they are, even if it is not after Him that they are.

And let no one, hearing this, say: "Why is the Father unbegotten, and the Son begotten, and the Spirit proceed?" And: "What is generation?" Or: "What is procession?" For the Father alone and the Son and the Spirit who searches all things (1 Corinthians 2:10) know these things, and they are known to them. As for us, it is only by these names that we have known the community of the essence and the particularity of the hypostases; but we renounce to search how these things are, inasmuch as they cannot be presumed. If therefore the Father possesses His person, and the Son His, and the Holy Spirit His, it is certain that it is neither the Father, nor the Holy Spirit who was incarnated and became man for us, but that it is the only Son, the Word God, the image of the invisible God and Father (Colossians 1:15); now an image is already other than the one of whom it is the image. For the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (John 1:14), according to the word of John, when he says what agrees with what Paul wrote: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Because therefore, when the Son became man without change and without confusion and in truth and outside of all imagination, He remained God, without being diminished in anything, and He took, from holy Mary Mother of God and ever virgin, a body that has an intelligent soul, and He was united to it hypostatically, and the same is consubstantial with the Father according to divinity and the same is consubstantial with us according to humanity, and He is one of the two natures of divinity and humanity, it is for this that, when we confess and profess—and we greatly admire the glory of the mystery—that, even after having humbled Himself by the incarnation and emptied Himself (Philippians 2:7), He did

not depart from being full and He did not lose being God, but He showed particularly that He is that in that He became man without change and He did not obscure the splendors of divinity, but He does what befits God and the same comes humanly to the things of the economy for our salvation (it is for this, I say, that) we offer up to Him the praise and we say: "You are holy, God."

And, because the same, in that He became man, voluntarily took the infirmities of the flesh, the insults, the blows, the (strokes) of the flagellation, the crucifixion, and all that accompanies that and which does not fall under an accusation, and by this He showed that He is strong in the things in which He seemed likely to be infirm—for it appeared, inasmuch as He is God by nature, that He cannot be seized by sufferings—and by this He bound the strong one because of the empire of sin, and He took us away, we who were his weapons (cf. Luke 11:22), saved as we are henceforth from the subjection of the Slanderer, it is to this Strong One who conquered Satan, who prevailed over us, and who delivered us from captivity that we say: "You are holy, Strong," to Him whom also Isaiah, who has the strongest voice among the prophets, knew then particularly as mighty God, when He took the weakness that is for us and consented to be incarnated. For what did he say? "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). And, after in the flesh He wrestled with death and descended even to the gates of Sheol, He rose again the third day, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it (Acts 2:24), as the apostle Peter said; for He was immortal by nature, even if in the body capable of suffering and dying He accepted to suffer, because it could not be otherwise that death approach Him. To Him therefore whom we have seen by experience that it was in an immortal manner that He was in death, to Him, praising Him, we say the (praise): "You are holy, Immortal."

And, just as, in the struggles that take place in pugilistic contests, we define as "victorious athlete" the one who lets himself be taken by his adversary, and is bound with bonds that cannot be loosed and are powerful and seems already brought down to the ground, and who due to the greatness of his skill and strength looses (his) bonds and stands above his adversary, so, concerning Emmanuel also,

we have been in admiration of the fact that, after He was bound to the cross, and was nailed by His hands and by His feet, and was delivered to death, and was going to be shut up forever in the abysses that are under the earth—and He did not seem able to be delivered—by the Slanderer and by the wicked armies that are under him (in admiration of the fact, I say, that) by the cross He destroyed and overthrew Satan and the spirits of the air and when in Sheol He broke the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in sunder (Psalm 107:16); for the keepers of Sheol, as it is written, when they saw Him, were seized with terror (cf. Job 38:17). That is why we also make known the kind of death, I mean that which took place by the cross, showing the greatness of His strength and saying with (all) freedom: "Holy, Immortal, you who were crucified for us, have mercy on us." Thus therefore with Paul we say: "He spoiled principalities and powers" (Colossians 2:15), inasmuch as He voluntarily consented to be under their bonds and cut (those) bonds.

This praise therefore is said of the only Son of God, of the Word, who for us was incarnated and became man. For that the Father also is by nature God and strong and immortal, and similarly the Holy Spirit also, is certain for everyone. But, opposing ourselves to the foolishness of the pagans and to the unbelief of the Jews, for whom a crucified one is foolishness and a stumbling block (1 Corinthians 1:23), we say: "Holy, God, you who for us became man without change and remained God; holy, Strong, you who in weakness showed the superiority of strength; holy, Immortal, you who were crucified for us, who endured in the flesh the death that took place by the cross and showed that you are immortal, even when you were in death." It is therefore very usefully because of the unbelievers that we say that this praise ascends for the Son. For the Father and the Holy Spirit were never in humanity, nor in weakness, nor in death. But the only Son, the Word of God who was incarnated, voluntarily took this upon Himself; and, when He was in adversity, He showed very brilliantly that He is impassible God and strong and immortal. And it is because of this that three times we offer and make ascend for Him the (praise): "You are holy," to show that it is not another outside of the Holy Trinity, who as one of the creatures was enriched with holiness by participation, because by nature He is holy as God, but that He is one of these three hypostases by which the others can be sanctified, and because the praise of the Son is the praise of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. For of those whose essence is one, of those the praise also is one, and he who praises one of these three hypostases has in

no way separated the other two from the doxology; for in the doxology of the Son there is the doxology of the Father and that of the Holy Spirit.

Let no one therefore say by ignorance that the (praise): "You are holy, God" befits the Father, and the (praise): "You are holy, Strong" (befits) the Son, and the (praise): "You are holy, Immortal" (befits) the Holy Spirit, so that it seems that "the one who was crucified" is added as a fourth and counted in addition to the Holy Trinity. For if it were said by us in such a thought, it would necessarily be received also by those who defend the impure opinions of Nestorius and who say the one Christ is two natures after the union. But, given that they know exactly that we praise as immortal the one who was crucified, because He is, as we have said, one of the Holy Trinity, they become angry, and they are indignant, and they hurl words of blasphemy even against heaven, and they call the fact itself "new," and they say that they have much enmity and hatred for what is new, while it escapes them, (them) who utter vain (words) and who cry from the earth, as the prophet Isaiah says, that the usages of the Church did not all come to us from apostolic traditions, but that there are some that have passed into the whole (Church) that is under the heaven also by successive inventions and progress. And there is first the (fact) that we are named Christians many years after the Gospel was preached: which, after having begun from that Church of Antioch, has encompassed us to (form) a holy people, we who are in every place of the earth.

And, to leave aside a great number of (examples), I will recall one or two. This feast and solemnity of the "Meeting," which is celebrated in Jerusalem and in all Palestine, making memory of the day when Simeon received Christ in his arms, when (He) fulfilled the Law and offered the sacrifice that was ordained by Moses—which (Simeon) also, after having recognized that (Jesus) is also God by nature, said: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word" (Luke 2:29)—(this feast, I say) was not celebrated in the imperial city. Now however that city also has imitated the usage that has been preserved among others, and there has been no question whatsoever of blame or reproach of novelty. And in this city of Antioch, you know, the kind of this feast that has been mentioned is not known. And even in Jerusalem this feast was not something ancient; but it was invented recently, as we have heard said by some ancient men.

Now one can say this same thing also concerning this feast of what is called "Branches," when a whole crowd, carrying branches of palm trees in their hands, accompanied our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, mounted on a donkey's colt and entering Jerusalem, and led Him in triumph going before Him, while children also congratulated Him truly as being the Most High God, saying: "Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:9). And indeed, the day of this feast, although it was not celebrated among many and now, to speak in a general way, it is celebrated among all men, has not been rejected as a new invention by any of those who have imitated those who were already celebrating it. But many other things also have been invented successively, whether in prayers, or in praises. If someone does not accept the (addition): "The one who was crucified for us," because it is "new," let him reject also this whole praise, inasmuch as it was not in honor anciently, but it began a short time ago and it is not said by all; for the Alexandrians and the Libyans and the Egyptians do not sing at all in church this praise to the Savior of the universe, to Christ. For the (word): "Holy, holy, holy, Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:3), said by the seraphim, was reported to us by the prophet Isaiah, when he obtained to see and hear (that); but the (word): "Holy, God, holy, Strong, holy, Immortal," was added a very long time after. If therefore we have accepted in these (praises) the addition as pious and we confess as true God the one who was crucified, let us not call "new" the confession of our faith, since it is with reason that it was added to this praise, which fights the Jewish foolishness of Nestorius and which is sung thus in the holy Churches of God. And it is by our city of Antioch that it began, by which began also the name of Christians; but already it has reached even the Churches of Asia and it makes its way henceforth toward all the Churches.

This therefore, we have said for your safeguard; as for those who apply themselves to impiety and who fight against the mouth of the Lord, as it is written, and who glory in occupying Jerusalem, they will often repent of what they have learned badly, when they are struck by the right hand that comes from above, whether those who hold the place of the chiefs, or those who follow those; and upon them will be fulfilled what was said by Isaiah in the form of prophecy in these terms: "And the people turned not unto him that smiteth them, neither did they seek the Lord of hosts. Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day. The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that

teacheth lies, he is the tail" (Isaiah 9:13-15). For who would have thought that Theodoret, another Nestorius, or rather who even surpasses that one by blasphemies, is read in the holy places of Christ as a prophet who teaches iniquities? And the chiefs who admire faces and do not blush before God have permitted, that is, allowed this to be done. For have they not read his refutations made against the twelve chapters of Saint Cyril, where, taking pretexts to blame the mixture of God the Word and the flesh, he dared clearly to fight the word of the Gospel and say: "Because therefore the Word did not become flesh..."? Or rather, stopping their ears, do they not exceed even this by running?

We therefore, ask in prayer both for ourselves the preservation of an orthodox faith and for those changes to what is perfect; and we put away and reject completely the foolish ineptitudes of the partisans of Nestorius, where those who have lost their intelligence say, forging certain expressions that are not written and have no witnesses, that one of these two thieves who was crucified with Our Lord was named Demas, and that it is he, they affirm, that those who say: "You who were crucified for us" praise. First therefore let them answer from what book they can draw this, and secondly why they did not rather reproach this first to those three hundred eighteen Fathers and to those one hundred fifty (Fathers); for those said: "He who for us descended, was incarnated, became man, suffered," so that it seems that it is not Christ, but Demas, that, according to your follies, using barbarisms with blasphemy and with ignorance, they have made God, and not a brigand. But perhaps Paul, and not ourselves, will be found to be closer to your calumny? For he wrote to the Corinthians: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor" (2 Corinthians 8:9). Now your Doumas, who was invented suddenly, is closer to the (expression): "For you," than to the (expression): "For us." But this is a mockery and a jest of little children, and (these are) words of the intelligence of a drunkard. And indeed, if we must forge words by a change of letters and by suppressions, let us make a small change: Paul, that is, "phaulos" (vile), and "chrysos" (gold), instead of "Christos" (Christ); and it will be found that it is Mammon that we venerate and adore. Truly the fool will speak foolishness, and his heart will understand vanities (cf. Isaiah 32:6), according to the word of Isaiah. As for us, may the Lord not deliver us by such folly to a reprobate mind, but may He save us by His grace!

And let those also who are now in Jerusalem remember that those who formerly were there had first struggled against the synod of Chalcedon, and that when Juvenal, their bishop, returned, they did not receive him and imposed hands on another, and that that other bishop ordained more than ten according to the number, but that, when the same Juvenal returned, he entered Jerusalem with a great number of soldiers, with whom a crowd of Samaritans massacred six hundred monks, holy men, while there also occurred signs—and not a few—that I willingly keep silent, but that the Book of heaven necessarily relates. Did those not occupy those holy places? Were they not filled with zeal for the faith? Did the ancient things not deserve more to be believed, more than those that are now decreed in a new way? Yes, certainly, even if you do not wish it; for the God of truth, who is Christ, is witness. To Him be praise, with the Father and the Spirit, holy in all and life-giver and consubstantial with Him, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen!